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MOHICAN COTTAGE ON LAKE GEORGE

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A THESIS

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to the memory of my mother

Hebe Bixby Schafer

In writing this thesis, I have received encouragement from a number of individuals. George E. Thomas, my advisor, patiently guided my work, greeting each chapter with renewed enthusiasm. His family welcomed me to their house, where we have discussed Mohican Cottage over delicious home-cooked meals. Mark A. Hewitt, my reader, directed me to many valuable sources. And Bixby family members have supported me with interest and help.

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PREFACE

Two large mountain ranges shelter Lake George in upstate New York. The Green Mountains rise to the east of the lake and the Adirondacks stretch to the west. The lake is long and thin, gouged by the glaciers, and resembles a winding river flowing from the bottom of Vermont's Lake Champlain. However, in reality, Lake George flows north up into Lake Champlain. A series of falls, descending 220 feet, separate the two bodies of water. The scenic hillsides which ascend to the east have been safeguarded by New York State. They contribute to the Adirondack State Park which encompasses close to six million acres. Just beyond this layer of mountains is the State of Vermont. The State Park also includes many of the approximately two hundred and fifty islands that dot the lake's surface. The lake itself is nearly thirty-three miles long and three miles at its widest point, just north of Bolton Landing, where the massive Tongue Mountain juts out into the lake. As the lake continues northward it narrows, and its shores become less populated.

Mohican Point lies to the south of a small bay on Lake George, just below the town of Bolton in Warren County (see figure 2). A 1901 Colonial Revival home, Mohican Cottage, stands proudly on the point, along with a cluster of support

structures. The Mohican Point estate comprises a little over eight acres. Upon entering the property from Lake Shore Drive, the western boundary, the driveway pierces an iron fence which extends approximately 300 feet both to the north and to the south. The black posts are handsome barriers, allowing for glimpses of green slopes and stately trees. Moving east towards the lake, the driveway moves through an allee of water maples. To the north of the line of trees lies a clay tennis court, to the south the grade slopes down to a pond which empties into a small creek that winds its way down to the lake. The house itself lies to the north of the drive, approximately 200 feet from the tip of the peninsula. A stone retaining wall curves along the point, and frames the property's eastern boundary.

Family members will be surprised to read "Mohican Cottage" throughout the following pages, for within the family, the home has always been referred to as "The Big House." However, for the purposes of this paper, Mohican Cottage will be the nomenclature, since that was the name used by architect Wilson Eyre, Jr. and client William Keeney Bixby for their project. Names have corresponded with the evolution of the estate and reflect passing tastes. The built environment on Mohican Point has evolved from Roger Edgecomb's house (c. 1801-1850), to Mohican House, an inn (c. 1850-1898), to Mohican Cottage (1901-1902) to The Big House (1902-present).

The house, too, has physically evolved from a whole mansion, to one compartmentalized by apartments. As a family retreat, the home continues to host hoards of Bixby relatives each summer. Family members all grow up, running in and out of the main entrance, the house a blurred, internalized image in our collective minds. How often do we step back and study the lines of the home, its silhouette? This thesis intends to spark an educational process, commencing with a fundamental objective: to understand the origins of our family estate in order to safeguard it for future generations.

CHAPTER 1: WILLIAM KEENEY BIXBY AND HIS ARCHITECT

William Keeney Bixby (1857-1931) stands as an exemplary figure of his time, when men could become millionaires by playing a part in the rapid expansion of industry in the United States. Bixby embraced solid mid-Western values; he was born in Adrian, Michigan in 1857, and spent most of his life as a St. Louisian (see figures 4 and 5). In 1873, at the age of sixteen, Bixby began working as a baggage clerk for a railroad; by 1905, at forty-eight, he had become the president, and then chairman of the board of American Car and Foundry, having climbed steadily but rapidly towards that ultimate position of authority. But he had other goals than mere economic power, for having achieved positions of leadership and wealth, he retired to pursue his reflective and aesthetic interests.

While William K. Bixby spent most of his life in the mid-West, he made a major detour through the South during his early adulthood. Bixby's father, Alonzo, had lived in the South for many years and fought with the Texas Rangers during the war of independence from Mexico.[1] When Alonzo Bixby moved to Michigan, it was only natural that he would continue to have strong personal and political links with the South, and that his son, William, would follow his footsteps.

After finishing high school in Adrian, Michigan, W.K. Bixby headed off to Texas, carrying a letter of introduction from Jefferson Davis.[2] At Palestine, Texas he accepted the lowly position of night watchman and baggageman for the International Great Northern Railroad. The president of the railroad, H.M. Hoxie, noted Bixby's conscientious spirit and after a year, rewarded him with a promotion to General Baggage Agent at San Antonio, a larger depot on the same railroad. There, Bixby worked just as hard. When Hoxie moved to St. Louis to become President of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, he took Bixby with him.[3] There he was made purchasing agent for the Gould Lines, a position of considerable responsibility that implied trust. Having started off as the Printing and Stationery Buyer for the Gould lines, and after working in St. Louis for several years, Bixby was offered a position with yet another railroad affiliated company, this time the Missouri Car and Foundry. His talents were again recognized, and in 1888, at the age of thirty-one, Bixby was named vice-president and general manager.

The railroad related industries, like so many others, merged and re-merged, changing names and adding names. Eventually, the Missouri Car and Foundry became the American Car and Foundry Company. In the early 1890's William Keeney Bixby became President of American Car and Foundry, a position which he held until elected chairman of the board.

The company's influence on the railroad industry was far reaching, for it was an early vertically integrated corporation. American Car and Foundry operated its own mills and furnaces in eight states, managing everything from timber tracts and ore deposits to the manufacturing of railroad cars. Ultimately, its passenger and freight cars were shipped all over the world.[4] After retirement, Bixby maintained his close connection to St. Louis, remaining active in its railroading and business community. He was Director of the St. Louis Union Trust Company, President of Laclede Gas Light Company, and later, served as a Receiver for Wabash Railroad.

There were other influences which shaped Bixby's life, but without doubt, the most profound was his relationship with Lillian Tuttle (1856-1931) of Bolton Landing, New York. In 1879, Lillian Tuttle journeyed to San Antonio, Texas to help keep house for her brother, Sidney, following the death of his wife. Family lore has it that she carried with her, for her brother, a large basket of chestnuts, an Eastern delicacy and something which her family loved. After a long journey requiring many connections (first a horse drawn carriage then several different trains), Tuttle finally made it to San Antonio. But when she stepped onto the platform, she accidentally dropped her chestnuts, which scattered all around her. Fortunately, a kind young man helped her recapture her precious cargo. That young man was William

Keeney Bixby, who took a "strong shining" to delicate Lillian Tuttle. Bixby asked Sidney Tuttle if he could call on Lillian, an act which took great courage, for Sidney was stationmaster and Bixby's first boss.[5] Bixby's determination proved fruitful; he and Lillian fell in love, and on June 13, 1881 they were married in San Antonio, Texas.

Lillian Tuttle had been born and raised in Bolton Landing, New York. The house in which she was born still stands and continues to be owned by a branch of the Bixby family. It was because of her link to that place that the couple chose to build a summer home on Lake George.

Selecting an architect for this home illuminates an important episode in Bixby's life, central to the story of Mohican Point. Bixby family members have been told by ancestors that W.K. Bixby met Wilson Eyre, Jr. on a steamship crossing the Atlantic. This might have occurred around 1895, when Eyre made one of his numerous sketching trips to England, and the Bixby family had also visited England. Supposedly they met on their return from England to the United States. This is a wonderfully romantic tale, however, it is more likely that they met through Detroit industrialist Charles Lang Freer (1854-1919).

Charles L. Freer and W.K. Bixby were business associates who shared Wilson Eyre, Jr. as architect. Freer's career followed a remarkably similar path to that of

Bixby's. He was born in Kingston, New York, and it was there that he began his equally prominent career in railroading. In 1870, Frank J. Hecker arrived from St. Louis to supervise railroad construction in the Kingston area. Hecker hired the enterprising young Freer who worked hard and excelled quickly. Betsy Fahlman discussed Freer's career in her article on his home in Detroit, "in 1879, both he and Hecker moved to Detroit where they became business partners in a company which manufactured railroad stockcars. The business expanded and became increasingly profitable. By 1899, both had acquired substantial fortunes, and they decided to retire completely, selling the company to William K. Bixby, a businessman from St. Louis."[6]

Their business connection was just one bond among many for Bixby and Freer. Like Bixby, Freer was an avid collector of art. Freer's collection of paintings ultimately served as the basis for the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Even more importantly, Eyre was the designer of two homes for Freer, one in Detroit, Michigan, the other in the Catskills, New York. The residence and stables in Detroit were built in 1890, with subsequent additions and alterations in 1904 and 1910. Eyre completed the design for a "log cabin" in the Catskills for Freer in 1892-93; however the "retreat" was never built.[7] It is quite likely that Freer recommended Eyre as the architect for Bixby's summer home. Fahlman supports this view,

suggesting that Freer was responsible for many of Eyre's commissions as well as influencing William K. Bixby's choice of artists, "for he collected the works of three of Freer's favorite painters, Dewing, Tryon, and Abbott Henderson Thayer."[8] Eyre was a far cry from their world of work - an artist - hence Bixby's decision to hire him even with Freer's recommendation, was a visionary one.

Wilson Eyre, Jr. (1858-1944) practiced architecture in Philadelphia from 1877 through the 1920's, a period of major transition in American architecture that spanned the accomplishments of the 1876 Centennial Exhibition and culminated with the birth of modernism (see figures 8-10). Eyre was a prosperous designer, writer, and teacher during this era; his interests ranged from the fine arts to magazine publishing to mastering several of the most important architectural styles of the time.

In approximately 1877, Eyre began as a draftsman under James Peacock Sims (1849-82), whose office primarily produced English-inspired suburban homes and churches.[9] Sims, a recent graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's school of architecture, had inherited the practice from his brother, Henry Augustus (1832-1875), who died suddenly of a stroke, leaving several commissions for Episcopal churches on the tables. The younger Sims completed a number of these projects and grew interested in Queen Anne designs. At that time, the English Pavilion at the Philadelphia Centennial

Exhibition of 1876 created a stir by introducing the architecture of Richard Norman Shaw to the United States. With its emphasis on low, horizontal planes and continuous interior spaces, the "shavian manorial" style seduced an entire generation of young architects, who saw it as an effective counter to the vertical Victorian of their predecessors. Eyre was no exception. When he entered Sims' office, he gravitated toward the anglicizing style of Sims' previous commissions along with the potential which he saw in the work of architect Richard Norman Shaw.

In 1882, James Peacock, like his brother Henry, died of a stroke, leaving the practice to Wilson Eyre, Jr. Thus, Eyre inherited a number of clients, and many projects on the boards, enabling him to launch his own career as an architect. The clients, well established Philadelphia families, felt comfortable with Sims' English mannerisms, both in his composure and in his designs.[10] Thereafter, Eyre in turn, adopted and successfully continued this tradition.

With his own practice, Eyre later broke away somewhat from Sims' ideals. He described his early work as eccentric and points out: "Had I been trained ten years later, I would have avoided many of the pitfalls into which I fell."[11] Undoubtedly, his work would not have been as interesting. In the 1880s, Eyre began to design homes that would later be termed "Shingle Style" by architectural historian Vincent

Scully, houses which fit into the Queen Anne Revival mode of domestic architecture. He was considered to be a master of this mode and his well-known houses such as those for Richard L. Ashhurst in Overbrook Hills, PA (ca. 1885), Charles A. Newhall in Chestnut Hill, PA (c. 1881), and Charles A. Potter also in Chestnut Hill (c. 1881-82) are within this style. Still later, Eyre made yet another shift in his career as an architect when he began designing houses in various historic styles, including several in the Colonial Revival.

The shifts Eyre made were substantial, and his design for Mohican Cottage was pivotal, for it marked a temporary movement away from English prototypes towards an American ideal. By the 1890s, with historicism sweeping the nation, Eyre looked back at American colonial forms as inspiration, incorporating their spirit of the new republic into Mohican Cottage. In addition, Eyre demonstrated that he knew how to "play the game" of modernism with the plan for Bixby's home. At this time, during the early twentieth century, Frank Lloyd Wright and other American architects had already begun designing homes with free-flowing interior spaces balanced on cross-axial plans. Eyre incorporated the concept of a cross-axial plan with continuous flowing interior spaces, focused on a prominent fireplace in his design for Bixby's home. In so doing he demonstrated that he could successfully adopt the modern manner.[12] Remarkably, Eyre

never again used this plan as a point of departure, and instead chose to quietly retreat from modernism.

Style is, of course, an extremely subjective ruler by which to measure design. Yet it is almost impossible to read about Wilson Eyre, Jr. without reading descriptions of the styles, manners, and modes in which he worked. In addition to his brief flirtation with Colonial Revival, Eyre's designs ranged between the suburban shingle style and the urban historical manner rooted in the English Queen Anne. Like other architects of his generation, Eyre's commissions were a barometer of the shifting tastes in architecture at that time. Since his career as an architect spanned fifty years, longer than average for architects of his day, Eyre stands out from his contemporaries in large part because he outlived many of them. This fact alone may account for his resume of projects reading like a history of architecture for this period.

Although Eyre's style changed to reflect prevailing tastes, there were many elements inherent in his designs which can be traced over the years. These include his sensitivity to the site, his concentration on craftsmanship, and his consistent dedication to designing homes that would last. With his designs, Eyre strove for the "charm of simplicity, repose and harmony," emulating the "Elizabethan half timber house," because "it seems to belong to the soil, fitting into the landscape like a thing that has grown

rather than been constructed."[13] Landscape design commissions would make up many of his final projects, since he was a brilliant designer of natural settings. In 1946, John Harbeson echoed Eyre's words recalling, "the house and its surroundings [formed] a harmonious, picturesque composition...his homes always looked, in plan and elevation, as if they had grown - been added to through the years."[14]

Eyre presented his ideas to his clients through his picturesque drawings. We see through his free perspectives that his heart may have always been in sketching, which he referred to as his "important work." It is easy to imagine that his first love, that of fine art, was redirected into architectural design. As much as he mastered the discipline of architecture, Eyre's greatest gift lay in his free and spirited drawings. In Drawing Toward Building, which catalogues Philadelphia architectural drawings from 1732-1986, architectural historian, George E. Thomas, selected a number of Wilson Eyre, Jr.'s renderings as high points of Philadelphia artistry. In describing Eyre's section drawing for a conservatory, Thomas commented on his technical ability at capturing such diverse elements as marble columns, skylights, and barrel vaults, and pointed toward the architect's true talent, "the evocation of the mood of a gardenlike room, cooled by the breeze and abloom with exotic plants, is Eyre at his most flamboyant."[15] Eyre's drawings

for Mohican Cottage are similarly rich. Thomas traces Eyre's work, noting that he began with ink drawings "directly derived from English architectural illustrations from the school of R. Norman Shaw" and moved toward more impressionistic watercolors. His later work culminated in the style of newspaper fashion illustrations.[16] The watercolors for Mohican Cottage reflect this final stage in Eyre's mastering of this medium.

Through these drawings, and through a resurgence of interest in architects of the Victorian era, Eyre is beginning to receive more critical attention. He occasionally appears as a footnote or merits a passing comment, but has been seriously examined by only a few historians. Architectural historians may have neglected Eyre's contributions to the field because he worked in Philadelphia, which until recently, has been notoriously overlooked as a significant architectural center.[17] However, Albert Kelsey, a prominent member of the Philadelphia chapter of the Architectural Institute of America and an influential publisher, appreciated Eyre's temperament and originality. Kelsey chose to include a lengthy article on Eyre in Architectural Annual 1900. This was an honor reserved for very few architects, and Eyre was in the company of equally eccentric and equally brilliant figures including Louis Sullivan and Frank Furness.

Once they met each other, Bixby and Eyre must have discovered many common interests, beyond their mutual friend, Freer. Wilson Eyre and William Keeney Bixby shared a deep appreciation of art and literature, and particularly an admiration for English romantic work. They were kindred spirits in their love of everything English. Their differences were quite evident, though, for Eyre was a slight, willowy man, an Oscar Wilde figure, who contrasted sharply with the industrialists Freer and Bixby, who were men of great physical stature. Still, Bixby also admired Eyre's designs, for he would not have chosen Eyre had he not liked Eyre's previous work for Freer. Perhaps he also saw examples of Eyre's architectural drawings, which were intensely beautiful, and as an admirer of fine art, Bixby would have deeply respected the painterly quality of Eyre's renderings.

On the other hand, it is easy to see why Bixby was an attractive and desirable client. W.K. Bixby was simultaneously an imposing figure (he was quite tall, and rotund with piercing dark eyes), and a quiet, cultivated reader of Thoreau's Walden. This stately individual was a renaissance man in its truest sense. Whereas, on the one hand, Bixby pursued big game hunting on safari in Africa, returning with impressive trophies, he privately printed Shelley's complete notebooks at home. He traveled for hunting and he also traveled to view and collect art.

As Christmas gifts, Bixby often bestowed upon his friends and family books he had recently printed (see bookplates, figures 6 and 7). He was a voracious reader, who, it was noted, carried a book with him at all times. Appropriately, he collected books, paintings, and autographs with the same intensity with which he had pursued business. W.K. Bixby endowed many libraries including that at Washington University and the Missouri Historical Society, both in St. Louis. Perhaps the largest collection of Bixby's manuscripts lies at the Huntington Library in Pasedena. He and Huntington were favorite partners in trading books, and the idea of endowing a private library set amidst a garden of extraordinary beauty must have greatly appealed to Bixby.

Bixby also gave a collection of books to the Keats/Shelley House in Rome and endowed one of their rooms, which helped restore the entire apartment and establish the museum. Bixby felt strongly about honoring the authors by preserving their abode in Italy. Eyre, who had been born in Italy, was also deeply interested in Italian architecture and culture, and must have admired his client's interest in this same area.

Mohican Cottage on Lake George brought together the disparate strands of William Keeney Bixby's personality. Eyre addressed the internal dichotomy of his client with a design that was both an imposing construction, one which

stood out, stark and white, almost humbling the viewer, and a design of refined and intense beauty. It was a building which everyone, even the most untrained eye, could admire for its even proportions and continuous lines. Finally, and most importantly, with the structure's commanding orientation on Mohican Point, on the edge of the lake, with the sky and the mountains as a frame, Eyre produced a breathtaking composition which honors the memory of both men.

Notes: Chapter 1

1. Howard S. Mott, "William Keeney Bixby" in Grolier 75: A Biographical Retrospective to Celebrate the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Grolier Club in New York (New York: Grolier Club, 1959), 82.

2. Ibid, 82.

3. Ibid, 82.

4. National Cyclopedia of American Biography (New York: James T. White and Co., 1939)

5. Ralph F. Bixby, ed. Diary of Lillian Tuttle Bixby and the Tuttles of Bolton Landing (New York: Privately Printed, 1965), 34.

6. Betsy Fahlman, Wilson Eyre in Detroit: The Charles Lang Freer House" in Winterthur Portfolio 15, no. 3 (Autumn 1980), 258.

7. Ibid, 269.

8. Ibid, 269.

9. Edward Teitelman and Betsy Fahlman, "Wilson Eyre and the Colonial Revival in Philadelphia," in The Colonial Revival in America, edited by Alan Axelrod (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985), 76.

10. George E. Thomas, "Pecksniffs and Perspectives: The Changing Role of the Drawing in the Architectural Profession After the Civil War" in Drawing Toward Building: Philadelphia Architectural Graphics 1732-1986 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 147.

11. Wilson Eyre, Jr., "The Development of American Dwelling Architecture During the Last Thirty Years," Architectural Review 5, no. 11 (November 1917), 241.

12. Conversation with George E. Thomas, October 24, 1989.

13. Wilson Eyre, Jr., "My Ideal for the Country Home: A House Expressing Domesticity," Country Life in America 24 (May 1913), 36.

14. John F. Harbeson, "Wilson Eyre, 1858-1944," AIA Journal 5, no. 3 (March 1946), 133.

15. Thomas, 177.

16. Ibid, 123.

17. George E. Thomas, William L. Price (1861-1916) Builder of Men and of Buildings, University of Pennsylvania Dissertation, 1975, 1.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Historically, the Lake George region connected New York and Canadian trade routes, which made it the setting for intense activity and strategic battles. In addition, Lake George links the Hudson River to Lake Champlain, and has therefore been an important waterway even from the time of Indian settlements. William Holden Samson, in Mohican Point on Lake George, published in 1913, wrote about the successive feuds fought over this strip of water:

> "No lake in America is so rich in historical associations. The Indians fought on its waters and its islands and pursued the deer on its mountains long before the white men came. From the earliest days of its recorded history, it was part of the great water route between Canada and New York, the control of which, being of supreme importance, was desperately fought for, first by the Indians of Canada and the Iroquois of New York, then by the French and English, and finally by the English and the Colonists. At both ends of the lake, and on some of its islands, are remains of fortifications erected a century and a half ago."[1]

The area is indeed rich in Indian lore. James Fenimore Cooper referred to the Lake George area in The Last of the Mohicans, however for fictional purposes, changing its name to Lake Horicon. At the turn of the twentieth century, family members collected arrowheads which washed up along the small beach at Mohican Point. Generations have handed down the compelling Indian legend of the sacrifical stone, a large white rock now on Mohican Point. Although the

presence of native American Indians in the Lake George region diminished over time, "Seneca Ray" Stoddard described a settlement in his guidebook as, "six or seven families in all, from the home of the St. Francis Indians in Lower Canada, coming in the spring and usually returning with the frosts; descendants of the Abenakis."[2]

For a quarter of a century, Seneca Ray Stoddard published pocket-size guidebooks touting the Lake George region. He updated his works annually, beginning in 1873, noting changing hotel rates and adding new transportation routes. He included chapters on Bolton Landing and Mohican House (the property W.K. Bixby would later purchase), and his descriptions of the inn provide the earliest written references to the site. Stoddard lived in Glens Falls, just south of Lake George, and frequented Mohican House. The hotel's register records that he stayed there at least once a year from the period 1883 to 1898. His guidebooks were beautifully illustrated, and his photographs, drawings, and maps survive today in local libraries and historical societies depicting the region at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Stoddard represented the major promoter of travel to the Lake George region during the late nineteenth century, since his enthusiasm proved inexhaustible. His guidebooks to the area were popular among visitors, and armchair travellers alike, encouraging travel to the Adirondacks.

Stoddard's quirky often humorous descriptions were similar to Mark Twains' travel tales. Both writers were making their observations at about the same period. Stoddard's portrayals glorified the area: "Off for Lake George! How the heart bounds and the pulse quickens at the very sound of the words that bring with them thoughts of the holy lake. In fancy we once again breathe the air, heavy with the odor of pines and cedar."[3] Stoddard described Bolton Landing: "Bolton...possesses attractions that, in the eyes of its patrons, place it first at Lake George; for while it is near good fishing ground, and within easy rowing distance of the narrows, it is still connected with the outer world by the steamers that touch daily, and by a good country road, forming a pleasant drive...It is rather quiet, and patronized by a good class of guests, many of whom are booked for the season."[4]

Fishing and hunting have been longtime attractions of the Adirondacks. Stoddard reported on the fishing conditions at Lake George in depth, "the game fish are lake trout and black bass," as well as on the laws which governed the sport.[5] He added "there is no law against shooting bears, which was probably an oversight, but those found guilty of taking muscallonge, moose or caribou at Lake George will be severely dealt with, as the law is very strict on these points, and the game constables are always on the warpath."[6]

Stoddard's account of Mohican House illuminated his style of observation, which he punctuated with references to James Fenimore Cooper: "The Mohican House is not, as its name would seem to imply, kept exclusively for the accommodation of that noble tribe of warriors whose name it bears. At present there are not enough of these eminently distinguished individuals traveling to insure success to an hostlery devoted exclusively to them. Neither is the proprietor a 'big Ingin' of the tribe; does not resemble them in the least in person or act; was never known, in his most playful mood, to tomahawk a guest, or even wield the sportive scalping-knife, with intent to lift a 'har'."[7]

Guide and tour books of the late nineteenth century reveal how summer visitors journeyed to Lake George. We see from these accounts that travel was indeed a complicated affair. Seneca Ray Stoddard's guidebooks were the most plentiful, published on a yearly basis, and other travelogues appeared which were directed at a particular regional audience, such as The Northern Tourist Illustrated published out of Philadelphia.

In The Northern Tourist, J. Bonsall outlined travel routes from Philadelphia to the Adirondacks mentioning possible stops along the way, and coloring the destinations with lively anecdotes. He featured Lake George in his book, delineating an itinerary which began with a train ride to New York City's Pennsylvania station. He described all the

different companies' lines which provided service, and the separate means of transportation available to reach the northern points. However, he detailed one specific route to Lake George which he and a group of friends chose; the trip took approximately twenty-four hours and required six different connections.[8]

Their trip began with a two hour train ride to New York City. From there, at six in the evening, they embarked on an overnight steamer up the Hudson River to Albany, New York. Bonsall and his crew reached Albany at five o'clock the next morning and, "as the train does not leave till half-past seven, there is ample time for breakfast and a slight glimpse of the hillside capital of the Empire State."[9] From Albany, the travellers caught a train to Saratoga, via the Delaware and Hudson Company which took them a little more than an hour. Bonsall observed Saratoga, comparing it to the more scenic, natural setting of the Adirondacks: "Saratoga is a perfect wilderness of bewilderingly large and magnificent hotels, and the resort, par excellence, of luxurious fashionable people."[10] After leaving Saratoga via the Hudson Canal Company's Railroad, and travelling northward, they crossed the Hudson River again and finally arrived at Fort Edward, New York. From Fort Edward, they switched to a short branch of the railroad which carried them three miles west to Glens Falls. Bonsall noted that the passengers were relieved when the next leg in

their trip entailed a stagecoach ride: "We mount one of the fine Concord coaches of the Glen Fall's [sic] stage company for Caldwell, on Lake George, nine miles distant by plank road."[11]

Finally, they reached the Lake, boarding the steamer the "Lillie M. Price" bound for Bolton. They stopped briefly at Crosbyside, an inn on the eastern shore of Lake George and steamed ten miles down the lake. "At the end of an hour we enter the landlocked bay on which Bolton is situated. While we are much pleased with the appearance and attractions of Crosbyside, we must, however give Bolton the preference. For calm, peaceful, quiet and beauty of natural surroundings, commend us to this place by all means."[12] Bonsall continued, "On its western shore are a number of good farms, with a good carriage road a short length of the Lake...For such as are in need of quiet, healthful rest, with utter relief from the cares and vexations of active business pursuits, it seems the very quintessence of perfection, a very paradise."[13] Specifically referring to Mohican House, Bonsall added "At the dock, we meet several Philadelphia friends rather unexpectedly, and with whom we gradually wend our way along a clean, well-swept gravel path, leading through a velvety and well-shaded lawn to the Mohican House, kept by M.O. Brown, Esq., a very courteous and attentive host."[14]

The scenery has long been a draw to Lake George. Just north of Lake George, Au Sable Chasm was a major tourist attraction at the turn of the century, and was considered well worth a diversion despite a difficult journey getting there. Visitors sought to escape from the industrial clamor, heat, and congestion of the cities, to breath the healthful air of the mountains. For a contrast to their regulated, urban lives, the rugged, wild terrain of the Adirondacks drew many travellers to its forested land. Bonsall illuminated the lure of the foaming waters of the chasm: "their dash and rush [produced] an exhilerating effect on our spirits."[15] A common element of recreation during the Victorian era was visiting natural wonders, and Lake George and the entire Adirondack area benefited from this booming fascination with nature. Both Bonsall and Seneca Ray Stoddard included chapters on Au Sable Chasm in their guides, and often referred to the healing quality of natural springs and the calming power of native rock formations.

When William Keeney Bixby purchased the Mohican Point property in 1898, the then famed Mohican House, a small lake resort, graced the site (see figures 11-16). The inn had played an important role in the early development of Bolton Landing and Lake George as a summer resort, having drawn many visitors, for it was known throughout the state as a comfortable, well-run establishment. The inn operated for a

century and appeared in the noted Guide Books for the region. Considered one of the most scenic spots on the lake, the topography of the site itself, a peninsula, commanded spectacular views of the water and surrounding mountains.

In 1800, the roots of Mohican House began, when Roger Edgecomb enlarged his small frame house on Mohican Point and converted it into a tavern. The building lead the life of a tavern until fifty years later, when Gilbert B. Gale purchased the property. Gale made improvements in 1856 to cater to the growing amount of summer visitors to Lake George; he expanded the establishment to include an inn which his sons later named Mohican House. As their trademark, they emblazoned a flag with a red Indian figure.[16] The Mohican House was two-stories high, its form long and low with a porch stretching across its southern facade. It became well known to travellers from New York to Michigan, particularly because of its own dock, an attraction for the guests arriving by water, a common means of travel from Caldwell, at the southern end of the Lake. Caldwell, which later became known as the town of Lake George Village, was the departure point for destinations north along the lake. Apart from its location, cuisine was the great attraction at Mohican House, and its excellent game dinners were reputed to be the finest in the region. (It was also rumored that the proprietors smuggled in

certain liquorious Canadian goods and hid an ongoing cache in the cellar.)[17]

The Mohican House continued as a popular lodging for nearly a century. In the early 1890's, proprietor Frank Clark printed a small brochure for the inn, and explained:

> "Mohican House is open from May 1st to October 31st, and accommodates about eighty guests. It is furnished in a first-class manner, both in public and private rooms. On the theory that restful sleep is a feature of prime importance at a summer resort, the beds are supplied with the very highest grade springs and mattresses, which are a welcome boon to the tired mortal seeking rest...The table and service are first-class in every respect, the former being furnished with milk, eggs, lambs, chickens, and vegetables fresh from the hotel farm. The water supply and sanitary conditions are all that can be desired...Amusements are manifold. Dancing and parlor entertainments share in popularity with fishing, rowing, sailing, bathing, tennis, croquet, driving, bicycling, steamboat excursions, and mountain climbing. On the premises is a fine, gently sloping sand beach, a safe and convenient place for children's bathing...A handsome and convenient cottage in the grounds [is available] to rent for the season."[18]

Rates for rooms ranged from ten to fifteen dollars per week, or three dollars per day. The Bixby family owns the register from 1883-1898, the period during which Frank Clark was in service, and other townspeople possess earlier books. Visitors were mainly from the New York City area and upstate New York, however there was a strong, loyal contingent from Philadelphia. Indeed, the original group of four investors who established the Sagamore Hotel, diagonally across the lake: E. Burgess Warren, William B. Bement, Robert

Glendenning, and George Burnham, were all prominent Philadelphia businessmen.[19]

The story of the Sagamore Hotel in Bolton Landing corresponds to the story of Mohican Point in several ways. It is the only other structure on Lake George, which echoes the appearance of Mohican Cottage. There have been three hotels on the site, each one looking back at its predecessor, mirroring and expanding the original design. From the time that the first hotel occupied the prominent site, it became the most well known landmark in the area. Its architects paid special attention to the hotel's orientation so that the view from the site out onto the lake, and the view from the Lake towards the site are mutually spectacular. If one stands at the tip of Mohican Point, and glances diagonally north, the Sagamore Hotel monopolizes one's gaze, as it always has since it was built.

There are three major links between the two structures. First, they shared an important figure, Myron O. Brown, a onetime proprietor of Mohican House and the original manager of the Sagamore. The second connection lies with the architects, in that both firms were from Philadelphia. Finally, when the Sagamore Hotel hit hard times in 1929, it was W.K. Bixby's son, William H. Bixby who helped the hotel get back on its feet.[20]

In 1875, Myron O. Brown became the proprietor of Mohican House, under an eight year lease from the owner of

the property, William H. Barker. A popular manager, Brown was the instigator of many improvements on the property; he added a porch to the main house and upgraded the water lines. In his 1879 guidebook, printed during Brown's tenure, Seneca Ray Stoddard heaped praise upon the hotel:

> "The house has been thoroughly renovated and refurnished; pure spring water has been brought through pipes from the mountains; and with boating, fishing, and livery facilities but little has been left undone that can contribute to the comfort or pleasure of old admirers or newcomers. A pleasant cottage on the shore just north of the house, with rooms 'en suite' and tastefully furnished, is of recent build and adds considerably to the attractions of the place. The grounds receive constant attention; the guests are the best; in short, there are few better or more deservedly popular places at the lake than the Mohican House."[21]

Due to a complicated set of circumstances involving the late recording of a deed, Myron O. Brown was unable to renew his lease on Mohican House. However, he had a loyal group of followers, satisfied customers who had spent many summers at Mohican House. Among the patrons were the four Philadelphia businessmen mentioned earlier, who encouraged Brown to embark on his own venture. The group chose Green Island as a perfect spot for their hotel. As early as 1873, Stoddard had observed it as "partially cultivated, and a promising hotel site."[22]

The Philadelphians formed the Green Island Improvement Company, purchased the island, backed Brown financially, and elected him supervisor over the construction of the hotel.[23]

Later, both E. Burgess Warren and George Burnham built private residences on the island. As prominent Philadelphian industrialists, they naturally chose the Wilson Brothers from their home city, as the architects for the project, for they were a well established firm known for their influential industrial designs. This then was the second connection to Mohican Cottage: both clients chose Philadelphia architects.

The first Sagamore Hotel was opened July 1, 1883. The Wilson Brothers, known for their finesse in engineering, designed the huge wood framed structure with all its guest rooms facing stunning views. While they are known to historians for innovative engineering, they also mastered the Queen Anne and Victorian styles of their era. Their design for the Sagamore was a handsome Victorian affair emphasized by vast spaces and luxurious rooms. Porches wrapped around the entire ground floor, some cut by second floor balconies. The complicated shingled roof presented numerous gables, some small, some grand. Stair towers stood out at the ends of the structure. The lawn surrounding the hotel gradually sloped down to the lake, with the main entrance at the foot of the incline. Upon one's approach by steamer, one could take in the entire range of the hotel. Wings extended from the picturesque Victorian body of the structure lending the entire composition a sense of quiet repose.

Ten years after its grand opening, the great structure burned on June 27, 1893. The summer blaze began in the laundry room and consumed, section by section, the entire hotel. Fortunately, there were no recorded casualties and many of the furnishings were rescued while the blaze continued inexorably on its course. The owners decided to re-build immediately. The second Sagamore was very much like the first, nearly recreating the Wilson Brothers original design. The second Sagamore opened its doors in the summer of 1894.[24]

In 1901 W.H. Tippett recalled the Sagamore when Myron O. Brown was proprietor:

> "Drives and walks extend in all directions under the trees. The island is connected with the mainland by a handsome stone and iron bridge. The style of architecture of the hotel is that of the sixteenth century. The furnishing is all that can be desired. No effort has been spared nor cost considered in making this an ideal resort. Electricity plays an important part here. Western Union telegraph office in hotel, post office, electric light plant, rooms 'en suite' with baths, news stands, elevators, bowling, golf links, billiards, tennis, base-ball grounds. Kitchens, laundry and out buildings fire proof. A large reservoir two miles away supplies the hotel with pure spring water, stand pipes for fire protection are on every floor. The hotel in matter of appointments, cuisine, etc., is not excelled by any other hotel in the United States."[25]

Unfortunately, even though Myron O. Brown, the Lessee and Proprietor at the time, took precautions against fire damage, the year 1914 again produced a fire which ruined

this second incarnation of the hotel. On Easter morning, the fire produced damages only partially covered by insurance. Locals expressed great doubt as to whether the Sagamore could ever return to its state of opulence. The June 27, 1914 issue of the local newspaper, The Lake George Mirror, lamented the loss stating, "...That it will ever be rebuilt in its former spaciousness and magnificence is very doubtful; in fact quite unlikely."[26] There was a pause this time between the ashes and the rebirth. But in time, the Green Island Improvement Company rebuilt the Sagamore in even more dazzling fashion, and 1922 heralded its grand re-opening.

Major stockholders in the company summoned Karl Abbott, well known as a successful hotelman, to manage the Sagamore.[27] Abbott envisioned an even larger structure and was intent on improving the facility, expanding its walls and its services. In early October, 1929, additions began with Abbott's inauguration of a catering service. However, work was abruptly halted midway, by an unforseen event - the Stock Market Crash of October 29, 1929. The value of the Green Island Improvement Company's stocks declined at a rapid rate and credit tightened. Out of the family's respect and concern for Lake George, William H. Bixby bailed out Karl Abbott and bought stock in the Sagamore, enabling Abbott to go through with his planned improvements. The

Bixby family was thus directly linked with the famous hotel opposite their beloved Mohican Point.

When W.K. Bixby had purchased Mohican Point, Lake George supported three well-known hotels, The Fort William Henry at the southern end; The Sagamore on Green Island, at Bolton Landing; and finally, Rogers Rock at the northern foot of the lake. At the turn of the century, Saratoga Springs was one of the booming resorts of the eastern seaboard, and Lake George reaped the benefits of its close proximity to Saratoga while maintaining a more subdued, restrained image. During this period, handsome estates had appeared along Lake George's western bank. The rugged shore was graced by long lawns and carefully groomed gardens. The names of the families who built homes along the lake at that time read like a Who's Who of American history - Spencer and Katrina Trask, founders of Saratoga's Yaddo; Adolph S. Ochs, publisher of The New York Times; George Foster Peabody; and Edward and Hedwig Steiglitz, parents of the photographer Alfred Steiglitz. A 1900 directory provides names of families and their estates along the shores of Lake George. The names of these homes reflected the fashion of the time, Oaklawn, Trinity Rock, The Hermitage, The Maples, The Moorings.[28]

Today, the historical importance of Lake George has diminished, but its natural beauty continues to draw visitors. The historic homes have mostly been subdivided,

and the Sagamore Hotel now offers time-share condominiums. Still, even around the edges of the most modern structures on the lake, there are traces of the past - a name from Indian lore, an island with the ruins of a french fort, a crumbling stone fence, or an attic filled with yellowing papers from long ago. As change overtakes and transforms Lake George, the importance of Mohican Cottage becomes more evident as a living link to the rich and varied history of the place.

Notes: Chapter 2

1. William Holden Samson, Mohican Point on Lake George, the Summer Home of Mr. and Mrs. W.K. Bixby of St. Louis, Missouri, With a Brief Glance at the History of the Lake (New York: Privately Printed, 1913), 13-14.

1. Seneca Ray Stoddard, Lake George; A Book of Today (Glens Falls, New York: S.R. Stoddard, 1879), 46.

3. Ibid, 1.

4. Ibid, 78.

5. Ibid, 42.

6. Ibid, 43.

7. Ibid, 83.

8. J. Bonsall, The Northern Tourist Illustrated (Philadelphia: John E. Potter and Co., 1879).

9. Ibid, 7-8.

10. Ibid, 8.

11. Ibid, 9.

12. Ibid, 13-14.

13. Ibid, 14.

14. Ibid, 14.

15. Ibid, 27.

16. Samson, 37.

17. Ibid, 36.

18. Frank Clark, Mohican House, Bolton-On-Lake-George, New York (New York: Privately Printed, 1895), 3-4.

19. Samson, 40-41.

20. Kathryn E. O'Brien, The Great and the Gracious (Sylvan Beach, New York: North Country Books, 1978), 24.

21. Samson, 39-40.

22. Stoddard 80.

23. Samson, 41.

24. O'Brien, 17.

25. Tippetts, 27.

26. O'Brien, 20.

27. Ibid, 21.

28. W.H. Tippetts, A Coup D'Oeil of Lake George and Surroundings (Lake George, New York: W.H. Tippetts, 1901), 27.

CHAPTER 3: ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

From 1860 through the early 1900's, America entered a turbulent and important period in its history as an emerging world leader. After the ruin and devastation of the Civil War, America was eager to establish a new national and global identity, distinct from its geographical, historical, and artistic past. Industrialization was in full swing, which characterized the post-1880s "Gilded Age." New technologies were being developed at a dizzying rate. The railroad was revolutionizing travel and our own sense of frontiers. Suddenly, people and indigenous materials, such as lumber from the mid-west and slate from Vermont, could be transported anywhere. The field of architecture felt these changes like shock waves.

As with any period of great change, there was tremendous uncertainty as to how to act. In the case of architecture, the questions were: What should be built? With what materials? What role should the past play? What forms are truly representative of America? It was impossible to practice architecture during this era and not confront these issues. Some architects, such as Wilson Eyre, Jr., looked to the security and splendor of European traditions as a source of inspiration for their work during this period. Mohican Cottage, for instance, owes much of its harmonious

design qualities to a careful and studied analysis of the architectural past. Other architects such as Alexander Jackson Downing (1815-1852), and later, McKim, Mead and White (Charles F. McKim, 1847-1909; William R. Mead, 1846-1928; and Stanford White, 1853-1906) confronted the changing climate of a newly powerful and newly self-conscious country by seeking to establish a new vernacular American idiom. This second strain also relates to Mohican Cottage in that this structure was part of the explosion of country homes which were built to reflect the owner's sense of self. Still other architects, such as Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886), responded to this uncertain period in architectural history with a unique and visionary output that transcended national boundaries and temporal precedents. The fact that all this was occurring within a span of forty years makes this era even more remarkable.

The size and composition of America was changing. The boundaries were expanding, but more importantly, the Eastern seaboard was evolving from a primarily rural, agricultural area to a densely populated area with urban centers and suburban spaces. For the upper class, the desire to live in the country became stronger and stronger, and as a result, architectural activity for summer homes and cottages boomed. Industrialization and commercial enterprise also offered new opportunities for architectural commissions. Suddenly, the playing field for what architects built vastly changed. In

addition, the relationship between the client and the architect also evolved during this period, with the architect gaining greater creative control. This particularly benefited an architect like Wilson Eyre, Jr. who considered himself an artist and concerned himself with every detail of the creative process.

Wilson Eyre Jr.'s sensibilities belonged with the previous generation of American architects. Having grown up in Italy, he felt comfortable with European traditions, and returned to Europe for sketching trips, especially to England. Eyre's heart was in this sketching, which as an artist, he regarded as his real work. He thus transported his admiration of Elizabethan architecture back to America in his designs for country houses. Undoubtedly, Eyre must have seen the English Pavilion at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia of 1876, affirming his fascination with English precedents, particularly the designs of Richard Norman Shaw. When asked to consider his "Ideal for the Country Home" for Country Life in America, Eyre responded with "A House Expressing Domesticity." He wrote: "Nowhere could the spirit of the Elizabethan cottage be more appropriate, for it is at once picturesque, frankly expressive of domesticity, and so particularly well suited to the country house."[1] Eyre continued: "the Elizabethan style gives us almost unlimited latitude in solving the problems of convenience. There are many precedents among

the seventeenth century cottages for most of the modifications we ever care to make."[2] With these phrases, Eyre nestled, content in the past. Even if he had not been chosen to build Bixby's home, he was an ideal candidate for just such a project.

Eyre was out of step with his peers, though, architects such as Frank Miles Day, Walter Cope, and John Stewardson, since he was slightly older than they, and his sensibilities leaned towards other directions. He was neither a raging Victorian like Frank Furness (1839-1912), nor a revivalist like Cope and Stewardson. This was partly because Eyre showed up between generations, and partly because he carved out his own niche...he emphatically maintained his role as an artist over that of an architect.

Whereas Wilson Eyre, Jr. represented America's tie with England, Alexander Jackson Downing was the spokesman for a growing popular movement which sought to assert its independence from Europe. In 1850, Downing wrote:

> "One would suppose that a cultivated American would exult and thank God for the great Future which dawns on him here, rather than sigh and fondle over the great Past which remains to Europe. One would rather wish that cultivated minds should find a truer and loftier pleasure in striving to form a free and manly school of republican tastes and manners, than in wasting time in the vain effort to transplant the meaningless conventionalities of the realms of foreign caste."[3]

Eyre's designs, while beautiful, never really had mass appeal. Downing's pattern books, on the other hand, were widely distributed and instantly put into practice across the country, as builders reiterated his models of country houses. Although Downing belongs to an earlier generation than Eyre, McKim Mead and White, and Richardson, his books were popularly read throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, and therefore, his words still belong to this same era. Downing was a pivotal figure in the development of an American ideal and was particularly influential because he recorded and disseminated his views. He was looking towards an architecture for all people, one which displayed where and how a family lived, rather than their wealth. In this sense, his architecture appealed to a growing sense of what American's sought after and what Americans stood for.

Even though Eyre and Downing represent opposite poles in the architectural output of this time, their ideas fuse together in the case of Mohican Cottage. For a brief period of time, Eyre enthusiastically explored and disseminated elements of the Colonial Revival style, of which Mohican Cottage is a strong example. When W.K. Bixby, a self-made man in the heroic era of American history, approached Eyre with his commission, Eyre could not foist upon him a cluttered, Victorian design. When Bixby presented his ideas to Eyre for a summer home on Lake George, he instinctively

gravitated towards Downing's principle that the house should be a reflection of the family which lives in it. Situated in a natural setting of tremendous beauty, the house is stately and imposing, yet warm, just like the man who commissioned it. While Bixby undoubtedly had strong ideas, Eyre's contribution to Mohican Cottage is still quite pronounced. Of course, he was the architect, but one also recognizes the mastery of detail, the European sensibility, and the emphasis on domestic enjoyments. Perhaps for the very fact that the home fuses these two conflicting poles in architectural practice, the home did not enjoy great notoriety in its time, nor today as an important work. However, the fact that the structure still stands and is still being used in the manner for which Eyre built it, is a lasting testimony to its successful device.

Colonial Revival was among the architectural styles which grew out of this post-civil war era, and even more closely out of the Centennial Exposition of 1876, held in Philadelphia. The Colonial Revival style flourished in America from the 1880s through the mid-twentieth century, peaking at the turn of the century. Regional varieties of the style existed in the east, which stemmed from three major roots, Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. The Philadelphia group championed a very free adaptation of colonial models, pioneered by Wilson Eyre, Jr. who brought this Philadelphia tradition to the Mohican Cottage project,

among other commissions. Ironically, Eyre essayed the Colonial Revival style long enough to build Mohican Cottage and assure its success in the popular imagination, only to abandon the style and return to more European traditions in his later practice.

In his article "The Colonial Revival and American Nationalism," William B. Rhoads keenly examined the style and commented that, for the most part, the designs "were not intended to recall specific patriotic landmarks."[4] However, Rhoads argued that "the Colonial Revival was inspired, from the beginning, by nationalist sentiment - the desire to have in America an American style distinct from European modes."[5]

The Colonial Revival was seen as a calming influence, a style which represented a return to old fashioned integrity, with an emphasis on the home. Expressing the sentiments of his age, the architect Wallace Nutting observed, "Anything which makes for peace in a country landscape is of the highest importance, for that is what American life needs most."[6] Continuing his summation, he added, "Anything that makes for permanence appeals to that sense of eternal which is so little exemplified by modern civilization."[7]

In his chapter on "The Ethical Style," Rhoads quoted a number of period writers whose opinions collectively supported this return to colonial precedents manifested both in lifestyles and in house styles. "The Colonial Revivalist typically saw the Colonial period as a good time, when

people were honest, sincere, strong--in a word, virtuous."[8] Support for the Colonial Revival style was instantaneous and broad-based. Rhoads also focused upon a 1903 editorial in Architectural Review, in which many revivalists proposed that their generation emulate modesty and restraint as expressed by the Colonial house, instead of loud, restless, extravagance as expressed by debauched Baroque New York townhouses of the era.[9]

In his conclusion, Rhoads emphasized the enormous popularity of the Colonial Revival during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in America, "Certainly more houses built in this period followed Colonial models than any other historical source, and the range of building functions and geographic areas that were infiltrated by the revival was very wide."[10] "Its popular success can be attributed to the fact that its appeal was so diverse...it appealed to the patriot in search of a national style, but also to the Anglophile because of its English background...Democrats were enthusiastic about the homes of the fathers of the Revolution or the small farmer, while aristocrats devoted their attention to the great southern mansions."[11]

An important promoter of this style was House and Garden magazine, founded in Philadelphia in 1901, which artfully disseminated examples of the Colonial Revival to the American public. Eyre's influence upon the magazine

went far beyond the period during which he was an editor, 1901-1905.[12] In their account of Eyre, the authors of the Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects wrote: "As editor and founder of House and Garden magazine, he successfully published his own residential designs, as well as those of the Philadelphia architectural community before the editorial office moved to New York."[13] In "Wilson Eyre and the Colonial Revival in Philadelphia" Teitelman and Fahlman also discussed Eyre's influence on House and Garden. Stating that Eyre co-founded the magazine along with two other Philadelphia architects, Frank Miles Day (1861-1918) and Herbert Clifton Wise (1873-1945), the authors explained: "In its early years, the magazine...was aimed at those with interests similar to the editors' own...the house and garden should be considered equally in design."[14] The authors pointed out that the periodical avoided overt proselytizing, thus "exposing the colonial widely in a context appealing to a broad range of sensitive readers, [which] may have done more to increase the popularity of the colonial revival than if it had been more deliberately slanted toward that style."[15]

In the first several issues, House and Garden published Colonial Revival designs by architects Charles Platt, and McKim Mead and White, along with the work of Eyre. Within the series of colonial revival homes, Mohican Cottage appeared in January 1903 (see figures 17-23). In the

following issue, March 1903, McKim Mead and White's design for James L. Breese, "The Orchard" was highlighted in great detail (see figures 24 and 25). There are many similarities between the set of conditions which governed the design of these two homes. In addition to these homes which appeared in House and Garden, McKim Mead and White's "Hill-Stead" (1899-1901), designed for the Alfred Pope family serves as a third example for understanding the success of the Colonial Revival style (see figures 26 and 27).

To begin with, all three clients who commissioned these homes were successful capitalists: Bixby served as President of American Car and Foundry, Breese made his fortune as a stockbroker, and Alfred Pope was a noted industrialist. The similarities between Bixby and Pope extend to the fact that they both made their fortunes in the mid-west through corporate mergers. Mark A. Hewitt established Pope's success in a note to his article, "Hill-Stead, Farmington, Connecticut: the Making of a Colonial Revival Country House." Hewitt explained, in 1877, as President of Cleveland Malleable Iron, Pope "consolidated several midwestern iron firms into the National Malleable Castings Company."[16] In addition, Pope "took a modest delight in the trappings of high culture and society."[17] Pope may have been modest, however, his collection of French impressionist paintings was astounding. The fine group of paintings included several masterpieces by Claude Monet.

In addition to the similarities between the three men, broad similarities exist between all three houses in that they featured white clapboard facades and wooden shingle roofs. All three homes shared details, including prominent pediments and classical porticoes. And most importantly, for both client and architect, the orientation of the house on its site was of primary importance. The architects carefully articulated the main entrances through porticoes in all three cases. The Orchard and Mohican Cottage profess remarkably similar door treatments, characterized by a frame of fan light and side lights, while Hill-Stead features a simpler door surround of pilasters. There are many additional details in common, however the overall composition is purely the architect's own idiosyncratic interpretation of Colonial Revival.

What the three clients shared, along with numerous other individuals who chose to build in the Colonial Revival style near the turn of the twentieth century, was personal intent. In contrast to the chaos following the Civil War, these men sought to ground themselves firmly in a house representing stability. As an extension, the structure itself would promote stable family life, a return to the solid morals of colonial times. This period was a period of great wealth, and the wealthy showed their affluence by building. Teitelman and Fahlman noted, "Spurred by the centennial, patriotic, wealthy, and leisured patrons

commissioned new and spacious colonial revival homes."[18] Successful businessmen looked to counterbalance their pressured business lives with serene home lives. They valued the honesty and sincerity of their forefathers, and aimed to recapture that spirit in the homes they built. The shouting, demanding, fast-paced environment which cloaked their corporate achievements was relieved by the calm, serene, quiet surroundings which their new colonial revival surroundings personified. The countryside further delivered peace of mind to these magnates, with the country air assuaging the clamor of the work place.

The popularity of the Colonial Revival style and the pursuit of the peaceful life were tied together through the rich landscapes and planned gardens that surrounded these homes. In fact, the relationship between built structure and the grounds governed the architects' entire artistic endeavor. For example, the Pope House, Hill-Stead, and the Breese house, The Orchard, both had extremely elaborate landscape schemes. The landscaping for Mohican Cottage's grounds, by comparison, was quite simple. The plans for Mohican Cottage did not include a formal garden, yet the other houses noted above did, and many homes of the period boasted magnificent gardens. Pergolas, terraces, and fieldstone paths abounded. Photographs of Hill-Stead and The Orchard capture the vistas that the inhabitants must have viewed daily: sloping lawns, fine specimen trees, and

carefully tended gardens. Photographs also pronounce the porticoes, and the entire frames invoke a sense of calm. A glimpse of water was another important element which many of the sites featured. Photographs often depict the houses reflected in a lake or body of water.

Eyre, in selecting these homes for publication in House and Garden, undoubtedly believed the houses were ideal country homes, for they expressed peaceful domesticity and the harmonious fusion of the built environment with the natural landscape. These examples, though revived the colonial frame of mind more than they revived specific colonial houses. The homes were personifications of the colonial spirit, one of individualism, morality, and virtue. Teitelman, Fahlman and Hewitt all contend that, in these architects hands, the style was more a colonial "survival" than a revival.[19] The architects loosely employed classical sources in these early examples, and were often quite experimental with their free interpretations. The finished products beautifully represented the clients' intentions, and today, serve to illuminate the time in which these men lived.

Notes: Chapter 3

1. Wilson Eyre, Jr., "My Ideal for the Country Home: A House Expressing Domesticity," Country Life in America 24 (May 1913):35.

2. Ibid, 36.

3. Alexander Jackson Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, (D. Appleton & Company, 1850, Reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969), 264.

4. William B. Rhoads, The Colonial Revival and American Nationalism," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 35, no. 4 (December 1976):241.

5. Ibid, 242.

6. Edward Teitelman and Betsy Fahlman, "Wilson Eyre and the Colonial Revival in Philadelphia," In The Colonial Revival in America, edited by Alan Axelrod, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985), 72. Teitelman and Fahlman cite Nutting in their footnote.

7. Ibid, 72.

8. William B. Rhoads, The Colonial Revival, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1977), 408.

9. Ibid, 413-414.

10. Ibid, 550.

11. Ibid, 550-551.

12. Edward Teitelman, "Wilson Eyre, Jr," In MacMillan Encyclopedia of Architects, edited by Adolf K. Placzek, (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1972), 35.

13. Sandra L. Tatman and Roger W. Moss, "Wilson Eyre, Jr.," In Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects: 1700-1930, (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1961), 253-254.

14. Teitelman and Fahlman, 54.

15. Ibid, 54.

16. Mark A. Hewitt, "Hill-Stead, Farmington, Connecticut: The Making of a Colonial Revival Country House," Antiques 134, no. 4 (January 1903):859. See footnote 6.

17. Ibid, 851.

18. Teitelman and Fahlman, 75.

19. Teitelman and Fahlman, 90; Hewitt, 851.

CHAPTER 4: MOHICAN COTTAGE: EARLY YEARS

Before building a summer home on Lake George, the Bixby family had spent many summers vacationing in Bolton Landing. Typically, they stayed with Lillian Tuttle Bixby's family. When William Keeney Bixby chose a scenic point upon which to build his house, the site of the Mohican House, the hotel had by then been in continuous operation since 1800. By 1898, it was among the oldest inns in the region.[1] However, it had fallen into disrepair, and had not kept up with modern improvements. Mohican House was by then antiquated as an inn, still operating on gas light from lamps.[2] It was then that Bixby bought the property which included the inn, and a number of outbuildings on thirty-seven acres of land. Simultaneously, he purchased a lot across the road from Mohican Point for its water source. In constructing a summer residence in an era of summer epidemics, water supply and drainage were vital considerations, and Bixby made certain of provisions for spring water. During part of the summer of 1899, Bixby and his family stayed at the Tuttle homestead and also at the Sagamore Hotel. During the following summers of 1900 and 1901, they occupied Mohican House as a private residence (see figures 28-30). During the Autumn and winter of 1901/1902, their new summer residence was erected on the site of the old hotel.[3]

Although Bixby tore down the main building on the property, he saved the outbuildings including two cottages, a laundry house, an ice house, as well as the foundations of the dock.

Possibly, Bixby originally intended to merely adapt the historic inn for his family's use; however, its condition was so poor he decided to tear it down and build anew. William Holden Samson wrote about his brother-in-law's home in 1913, stating: "It was Bixby's hope that the old house could be restored and preserved, but the timbers were found decayed and worm-eaten."[4] Perhaps the poor condition was only superficial, for there is a family tale of how difficult it was to tear down the structure. Bixby contracted a local carpenter to tear down the house, and when negotiating fees, the contractor stated that he would do it for free if he could have the lumber. The framing was solid though, composed of tight, hand-hewn mortice and tenon joints held together with sturdy pegs. The man who was commissioned to level the inn finally had to blast the framing apart with dynamite. He was unable to save anything. When W.K. Bixby returned the following summer and heard the destitute man's story, he wrote him a check on the spot to cover his work, though remarking, "I hope you have learned a lesson."[5]

William K. Bixby wanted only a summer residence, which was the primary purpose of the structure. This short season governed many of the design considerations. At most, the

home would be lived in four months out of the year, from late May to early October. This was to be a breezy home, cool and white during the summer days. In late September it was to be boarded up to hibernate during the cruel Lake George winters. Year after year, this was the life of the home, most of the time shut down, outdoor furniture brought indoors, sheets draped over the furnishings, awaiting the re-opening in May. The house has followed this seasonal function for close to a century.

Bixby had these design considerations in mind when he consulted Wilson Eyre, Jr. Eyre had designed many country homes, but this was one of the few that functioned purely as a summer residence. They chose the Colonial Revival style to distinguish Bixby's home from any home in the area. Together, Eyre and Bixby worked to produce a design which was unusual for both of them. Eyre had yet to design a Colonial Revival home; Bixby lived in a French Renaissance style chateau in downtown St. Louis (see figures 31 and 32).

Like many clients, Bixby was intent on making a personal statement through architecture. His homes stood out from their neighbors, just as he stood out in society. In 1892, Bixby commissioned a home in St. Louis, on an exclusive private street, Portland Place, where the majority of homes were Queen Anne and Richardsonian Romanesque designs. Bixby's home, on the other hand was the first house in St. Louis in the new "Chateauesque" style.

Charles Savage studied the home, designed by W. Albert Swasey, in Architecture of the Private Streets of St. Louis, noting, "the brick and terra-cotta facade of the Bixby house was in the fifteenth-century French (Renaissance) style that superseded the Romanesque."[6] Savage turned to Swasey's own comments on the design of the house, "[he] blamed the owner's 'individuality' for the choice of style but claimed the terra cotta work as the most elaborate done in St. Louis up until that time."[7] The house so clearly represented the style that it appeared in the McAlesters' A Field Guide to American Houses to illustrate chateauesque designs.[8] It remains an anomaly, still an intentional misfit on Portland Place's row of late Victorian and Richardsonian Romanesque residences. Thus, when it came time to design another home, Bixby again chose a form which would differentiate itself from its surroundings, this time the Adirondack region of upstate New York. It looked like no other house on Lake George and, just like the home on Portland Place, to this day it is arresting in its isolated style.

In examining the history of the house itself, three major categories surface: inspiration for its design, the design itself, and how the structure was built. In essence, precedents, plans, and construction form the logical divisions for this chapter.

For Eyre, for Bixby, and for the region, Mohican Cottage was an oddity. Eyre turned to the native vernacular

tradition of American architecture as inspiration for his design. Mohican Cottage was not a pure revival of one particular model nor did it revive a set of given motifs. Like other Philadelphia architects practicing the Colonial Revival, Eyre did not strive to recreate any one particular colonial structure, but instead looked toward the country seats of the Philadelphia region for his inspiration. He brought the study of these sophisticated structures to his design of Mohican Cottage.

The issue of historical precedents for the home forms an entire chapter in the design of Mohican Cottage. The question sparked more than one architectural historian's mind and continues to be the most puzzling characteristic of the home. What was Eyre looking at? How much of Bixby's tastes went into the design? What types of American structures did Mohican Cottage echo?

One probable model from the Philadelphia area was Thomas Ustick Walter's (architect, 1804-1887) "Carpenter Mansion," built in 1840 in Germantown, outside of the city (see figure 33). The prominent home was a well-known landmark on Germantown Avenue, a major route, which escorted travellers in and out of the city from points north. Eyre and fellow Philadelphia architects would have been acutely aware of the home, for it was torn down in 1890, a profound event for designers of the period. The image of the white marble Carpenter Mansion would probably have been in Eyre's

mind, while he envisioned the white Colonial Revival home for Bixby. Walter's design featured wings terminating in prominent porticoes, which particularly peaked Eyre's interest. Walter provided a solution to the problem of the junctures of the wings, which was, he placed a smaller, colonnaded portico at each crux. His design was remarkable, and Eyre echoed Walter's resolution in the porticoes at Mohican Cottage. However, on the whole, Eyre's composition was still uniquely his, and Bixby liked that. Anything that would differentiate his own home from other Colonial Revival homes appealed to Bixby.

There are a set of discrepancies and contradictions surrounding the issue of what influenced Eyre amongst architectural historians. Considered major authorities on Eyre, Edward Teitelman and Betsy Fahlman, cite Mohican Cottage in their works and disagree with many authors on their evaluations of Eyre. (Teitelman and Fahlman are currently working on a monograph on Eyre[9]). The two authors debated William B. Rhoads' characterizations of Eyre's work, and his analysis of the Colonial Revival in Philadelphia. They correctly contested Rhoads, stating in a footnote, "Eyre was neither 'academic and cold' nor 'completely academic' by 1917. Neither was he ever a true advocate of 'historical styles and Beaux Arts training.'"[10] Furthermore, "Rhoads's claim that Philadelphia lost her preeminence in architecture 'during the course of the

nineteenth century' is simply not true."[11] Certainly, these are valid complaints against Rhoads' conclusions. However, they also disagree with the conclusions of the 1903 article on Mohican Cottage that appeared in House and Garden, which Eyre, as Editor, had presumably approved. Teitelman and Fahlman remarked: "Critics and architects did not always have a clear conception of regional differences in various colonial styles, often condensing several geographical areas into one. As one writer inaccurately noted of Mohican Cottage, 'the house is treated in the style characteristic of country residences of Colonial New York and New England.' Although the Bixby house more closely approximates proper academic form than most of Eyre's other work does, the strange placement of the corner columns framing the open porches, the odd bay window jarringly positioned under a portico, the general horizontal arrangement, and the jumble of rooms at the rear continue to remind one of comfortable, rambling, old Philadelphia country houses."[12] To be sure, Philadelphia country estates, which can still be found along the rural lanes in the farm country, served as inspiration for Eyre's work; he brought this tradition to the Mohican House project. In summary, the question of Eyre's creative spirit, and which particular architectural models influenced his work, is debatable. It is probable that Eyre was inspired by the

Carpenter Mansion and by Bixby's desire to distinguish himself and his homes from others.

Although Teitelman and Fahlman hold that the design for Mohican Cottage "took its inspiration from the building demolished for its erection, a genuine colonial tavern,"[13] similarities between the two structures are not obvious. Indeed, early photos of Mohican House do not particularly lend themselves to this observation, nor do they predict or hint at the structure to follow. When shown photographs of the two structures, architectural scholars and family members alike have agreed that the two are largely different.[14] However, Teitelman and Fahlman's hypothesis does serve to illuminate several basic similarities in that the two structures are both low, white, and faced in clapboard. They each featured porches, that of Mohican House braced by square columns, Mohican Cottage by round pillars. However, the feel of the two structures was quite distinct.

David G. De Long, chairman of the Graduate Group in Historic Preservation at Penn, has impressed upon the author that Mohican Cottage looks back to the vernacular homes of New York State built a century prior. Thus, he contends that the home reflects houses of the region built in the early nineteenth century.[15] The question is which ones, and how were they revealed to Eyre?

Eyre looked to the architectural environment of the Philadelphia region; Bixby turned to the native vernacular of upstate New York. Therefore, there are two notable models, one from the Philadelphia area, one from the Lake George area. However, the finished product looked like no other, it stood alone.

Bixby must have been the translator for the model from the Lake George area, and a house quite near to Mohican Point may have served as his source. Since W.K. Bixby had very set ideas on architecture and art, it seems likely that he would have approached Eyre with strong opinions and a clear set of requirements for his country home. A likely source, known to both W.K. Bixby and his wife, Lillian was her ancestral home, a farmstead on Federal Hill, just two miles north and one mile west of Mohican Point in Bolton Landing (see figure 34). This home had been a family gathering place for nearly a century. Bixby probably had the image of the rambling and comfortable Tuttle homestead in mind when he began his efforts to recreate this same domestic feel for his own country estate. The family was closely tied to its roots in Bolton Landing, and W.K. and Lillian were very close to her side of the family. W.K. Bixby was especially fond of Lillian's brother, Sidney Tuttle, who had been his first boss in the railroad business and who had overseen his courtship of Lillian in Palestine, Texas (see figure 35). Thus, Both W.K. and Lillian

associated close, warm feelings with the family home on Federal Hill.

Ralph Foster Bixby, their son, wrote about the Tuttle Homestead in December 1965, as an aside to the publication of Lillian's Diary. Ralph Bixby's "Observations and notes pertaining to Tuttle Home" serves as a valuable document regarding his mother's early home. His observations are a chronology of change, carefully delineating when and what type of alterations were made. The house is still owned by Ralph Bixby's branch of the family, and remains in beautiful shape to this day. R.F. Bixby carefully recorded the life of the home, and his words reveal much of his character, as well as the character of the house:

> "The original home built by Stephen Tuttle in 1812, or probably earlier, was the eastern or two story structure. The clapboards still to be seen from the attic over the present dining room are proof of this. The present living room was undoubtedly the kitchen. The present hall closet originally opened off of this room...
> The west 1 1/2 story addition was probably added in 1841 by grandfather after his second marriage. We know that the narrow stairway was built at grandma's wish and it was probably she that insisted on the new kitchen (now our dining room) and converted the old one to a living room. As mother was born in the 1st floor front bedroom, I assume the rest of the family were also."[16]

In addition to the emotional and psychological evidence that links W.K. and Lillian Bixby to the Tuttle home, its straight-forward design offers further proof that it served as the model for Mohican Cottage. With its clapboard

exterior and bold massing, it typified the buildings of the post-Revolutionary War. A simple side-gabled box, the house was representative of the Adam style originating in England and popular in America between approximately 1780 and 1820. The front (east) facade exhibited five registers across; while the sides (south and north) showed two registers, typical for the Adam colonial houses. The home also featured a central entrance, pedimented side gables and a pair of interior brick chimneys. The windows consist of double-hung sashes and panes in a six over six configuration, with dark shutters added to increase the contrast. The door surround of the front entrance, graced by pilasters, extends to a small entry porch.

In his introduction to a H.A.B.S catalogue: Historic American Buildings, New York, David G. De Long discusses the colonial styles of the early nineteenth-century particular to New York State. He notes that the Adam style was "made fashionable by Robert Adam (1728-92) and his circle in England during the second half of the eighteenth century."[17] He confirms that one of the typical manifestations of this mode is "the suggestion of a front portico through the use of pilasters."[18] The Tuttle homestead adopted this effect. However, although the homestead proved influential for Bixby, there are as many differences between the two structures as there are similarities. This remains true for

all the possible historic precedents, again and again, they only hint at the design for Mohican Cottage.

The models outlined, therefore, were chiefly impressionistic. We can not say that Eyre transformed these examples, for his design only faintly echoes the Carpenter Mansion and the Tuttle Homestead. We must be content, then, with the knowledge that Mohican Cottage remains, even after long discussion and observation, an elusive hybrid.

It is probable that Eyre never saw the Lake George region, since no record of a site visit can be confirmed. Therefore, primarily, Eyre's detailed renderings governed the design of the home. His drawings were clear, concise and evoked the entire mood of the design, and he was extremely successful at conveying his intentions, on paper, to the builder. The Kahn Archive at the University of Pennsylvania maintains an extensive collection of Eyre's original drawings and holds six for Mohican Cottage. Two exterior elevations (see figures 36 and 37) and four interior elevations (see figures 38-41), all watercolors, make up the series. The interior views include one each for the living-room, dining-room, library, and billiard room. They beautifully depict such details as wall paneling, fireplace treatments, and built-in shelves. All six drawings are splendidly executed, colors and surfaces rendered exquisitely. The Bixby family owns an early blueprint of the first floor plan. Despite concentrated

efforts, the plan for the second floor has not surfaced. However, House and Garden published plans of both stories in the 1903 article on Mohican Cottage. Since he was the editor at that point, presumably Eyre produced these drawings. The Avery Archives at Columbia University has a copy of the sketches (see figure 42) which served as the basis for the diagrams in the article (see figures 43 and 44). The article serves as an extremely important document concerning the house. It was written shortly after Mohican Cottage was completed and provides an early written and pictorial record of the first years of the house.

In building Mohican Cottage, Bixby had the framing elements transported from the mid-west, and the boards arrived on site already cut to size. He was able to keep costs down because American Car and Foundry owned its own mills throughout the mid-west. The home was constructed beautifully and soundly entirely on a balloon frame (see figures 45 and 46). W.K. Bixby's great-grandson, Edgar Caldwell, a local builder and master carpenter, oversees all restoration work on the house and observes that the house's structural components remain strong.[19] Despite settling in the foundation (see figure 48), two factors have held the house true: the balloon frame and the diagonal ship-lap sheathing.

Strictly from his observations of the house, Caldwell notes that the architect designed the house low, with very

little foundation showing, to appear as though it had grown out of the soil. Wilson Eyre, Jr. would be delightfully proud to hear a craftsman voice those words, for he strove hard to compose this organic picture. To achieve the effect, Eyre designed the base with stone laid between floor joists - almost a fascia across the box band (see figure 47). Thin slate sills rest on the stone foundation. The joists were laid directly on top of the slate, and the cavity between the joists was filled with stone reinforcement. The crawl space underneath the house extends from the eastern wing of the house to midway into the western wing. The remaining portion of the western wing covers a small cellar. Used for dairy storage, it existed from the time of Mohican House and was under the "Gun room" of Eyre's original first floor plan. Thus the cellar survives from the very early period of the property, however, the rest of the foundation of the Mohican House was not re-used as a base for the Bixby home.[20] The crawl space is laced with storm water lines suspended from the floor joists and a heating unit which Bixby added later. Thus the space is a web of criss-crossed mechanical systems.

Working from the foundation, towards the bones and skin of the house, the balloon frame forms the major structural component. In American Building Art, Carl W. Condit illuminates the frame's affect on architectural design: "Two utilitarian innovations...were either stimulated by the

balloon frame or grew out of it. One was the open interior plan, spread out around a central utility core. It was achieved by building the house in four narrow, often balloon-framed wings in a cruciform plan."[21] It was this design, both in the construction and interior plan, which Wilson Eyre, Jr. utilized in his design for Mohican Cottage.

The House and Garden article furnishes an invaluable and explicit report on the process that went into designing the house. Wilson Eyre, Jr. presumably approved of the text. First, the article gives an explanation of the orientation of the house on its site: "There is a beautiful view of the lake toward the north, east and south, and in planning the house, the porches were so placed as to obtain the full advantage of this outlook. The plan forms a symmetrical cross, this scheme being adopted to give the rooms light from at least two sides. As a roomy effect inside was also desired, a large amount of space was given to halls."[22] The article continues with an examination of the plan which is "rather unusual in the manner in which it is worked out with reference to the axes of the wings, not an easy matter to accomplish when openings of the different stories are to be kept directly over each other."[23] The cross plan was very unusual for a country house. Thus, Eyre was given a complicated set of requirements for the house and his resolution was simultaneously extremely conscientious, and creative.

Eyre's design work for the wings was particularly ingenious, for the three wings which overlooked the lake (north, east, and west) terminated in an Ionic portico (see figures 49 and 51). The fourth wing, that of the kitchen, was unscreened by a portico (see figure 50). The Ionic columns rest on a thick marble slab, a wide coping, which forms the foundation of the porticoes. Above, the columns supported a pediment gable. Thus the pillars were beautifully articulated with pronounced pediments above their capitals and solid marble beneath their bases. The large pediments carry modillions within the raking cornice, and the modillions continue beneath the horizontal cornice. The tympanum is accentuated by an oval window surrounded by classic keys at its cardinal points. The twelve-paned window pivots from a central horizontal fulcrum on the right and left sides.

The House and Garden article describes the skin of the house in incredible detail: "The frame walls of the house are covered with clapboards of a special size, showing nine inches of face to the weather and with butts 1 1/8 inches thick. The roof is covered with split cypress shingles, seven inches to the weather, treated with bleaching oil, and terminates in a heavy modillioned cornice."[24]

While the article outlines many specific features of the house, for example, "the chimneys are built of Sayreville brick laid with wide joints,"[25] unfortunately, it

neglects a number of distinctive design elements. Among the details left out are: the pedimented dormers with arched windows, the Palladian window on the north facade, and the small porticoes supported by one column which occur at each juncture of the three main porticoes. The reader, accustomed to the writer's rich detail, also misses a description of the front entry, for instead, the article skips to the interior, "the main entrance is on the south portico, through a large vestibule divided from the main hall by a flat Doric arch enriched with triglyphs and supported on columns."[26] The front entrance door itself is paneled, while pilasters frame the opening, and the entire composition is re-emphasized with paned lights: an elliptical fan light above accompanied by two elaborately muntined sidelights. The door treatment is an unfortunate oversight in the article, since the door surround directly refers back to the Adam style, and is a key element in establishing the historical precedents for the design.

However, the author returns to capture the layout of the interior spaces: "At the right of the hall is the large living-room, and to the left, on the main axis of the house, is another hall running at right angles and from which open the billiard and dining rooms. At the end of the main hall opposite the vestibule is a wide stairway, finished in white pine and mahogany, with wainscoting on the wall side and carved stair-brackets on the other. From this end of the

hall opens the library, which is purposely removed somewhat from the main part of the first floor."[27] Finally, the writer considers the "main feature" of the home and a new kind of space for American homes of the period, the living room: "French casements give access to three porches, and a large bay window increases the effect of space and light. On the face of the mantle is carved the emblem of the Mohican House, an Indian with bow and arrows."[28] The bay windows were a prominent feature in Eyre's design. In addition to the large bay in the living room, he placed another bay configuration in the library, facing north. These bay windows lent texture to the facade, and along with the porches, served as connections to the landscape. Bringing the outside inside was a hallmark effect of many of Eyre's designs, and one which many architects endeavored to achieve during this era.

In addition to the rooms mentioned in House and Garden, the first floor plan included a "service wing," a set of rooms reserved for the domestic help, with the exception of the gun room. This wing held the kitchen, pantry, cold closet, and a small bedroom. The servants' living quarters continued directly above this space, on the second floor, connected by a small back staircase. Within the west wing on the second floor were three small "servant" bedrooms, a "servant lavoratory", and a linen closet. The very eastern

section of the wing held another small bedroom and a sewing room which opened onto a small balustered balcony.

We can trace several of the design considerations for Mohican Cottage from Eyre's 1908 article "The Planning of Country Houses," for The American Architect and Building News. In considering the layout of the "service quarters," he wrote: "[they] should be ample and should consist of the pantry, kitchen, servants' dining room or living room, a cold room or pantry, with a built-in refrigerator. This pantry should be so situated that it can be supplied with ice from the outside and conveniently near to the tradesmen's approach."[29] Indeed, accordingly, Eyre designed the very westernmost end of Mohican Cottage with a cold closet and small porch. In describing the second floor above, Eyre continued, "the servants' sleeping quarters are most convenient when placed in a wing of their own, or at any rate, separated from the main body of the house, closed off by doors and reached only by the back stairs. Each servant should have a separate sleeping room - about eight by ten feet is sufficient if cost is a consideration...There should be a bathroom for these servants' quarters."[30] Therefore, in designing the "service wing" for Mohican Cottage Eyre conformed to his ideals for planning a country house.

Thus Eyre had a set of standards for country houses, and he applied them rather vigorously to Mohican Cottage.

Whereas it seems likely that Bixby decided exactly how the exterior of the house should be designed, Eyre forcefully stepped in with his equally strong opinions in the design of the interior. Eyre followed his own set parameters in the layout of the second floor bedrooms, "the bedroom plan should be so arranged that the owners' quarters are somewhat separated from the guests' quarters...they should, of course, have their own bathrooms."[31] Eyre planned three guest bedrooms located in the north wing, four located in the south wing, and the master bedroom in the east wing, which made up the remainder of the second floor. In addition, each wing held a separate bathroom. The cruciform garret, used for storage, covered the entire second floor.

The House and Garden commentary ends with a brief look at these final points of the design: "The second floor and garret present no unusual features. The style of the house extends to the subordinate buildings - laundry and engine-room, boat-house and bath-houses."[32] In fact, the subordinate buildings or outbuildings not only extend Eyre's design, but complete his master plan by gracefully punctuating the entire point. Moving clockwise from Mohican Cottage along the curve of the point, the boat-house stands out as the largest and closest structure to the main house. Continuing along, the whimsical summer-house juts out into the lake, and finally at the southern bay, the bath-house announces the presence of a small beach.

Outbuildings play an important role in the history of the estate. Although no concrete documentation on Eyre's designs for these structures has surfaced, it is probable that he designed the boat-house, summer-house, and bath-house. However, Eyre probably did not design the laundry and engine room mentioned in House and Garden. Instead an earlier structure on the estate was adapted to hold these spaces. The three small "houses" reflected the main house with their prominent pedimented gables and white clapboard facades. The boat-house was divided into twin structures, two long, side-gabled shells with large semicircular windows cut into the tympanum of each gable. Tall Ionic pillars stretched underneath the north pediments, and cypress shingles spread across the roofs. The western twin structure, as a shell, held two internal moorings. The eastern twin was completely open, an overhanging roof covered thin external piers, or boat slips. A narrow boardwalk wound around on the east side of the structure. Again, Eyre's affinity for low structures is reflected here; from a distance, the boat-house looks as though he took the main house and submerged it, the first storey hidden underwater. Indeed, the narrow boardwalk was often partially submerged, and to this day, spring rains flood the boathouse.

The summer-house, a term which has remained in the family to describe a small dock which juts out from the very

tip of the point, appeared as a small temple in the water. It too, had columns and a pedimented roof. The little summer house was designed as an escape from the heat. Visitors could stand out on this small dock, cooled by the lake breezes, and take in the wide expanse of the lake. Eyre placed the bath-house, a tiny box, only large enough in which to change one's clothes, adjacent to the beach on the southern inlet.

All of these elements, Eyre's "final touches," accentuated the picturesque estate. Bordered by a forested area to the south and a smattering of cottages to the north, Mohican Point's grounds painted a serene portrait. The feel of the estate is one of an invitation to pause, and there are many locations on the property planned precisely for lingering...porticoes, summer house, the boulders at the tip of the point and small sandy beaches all presented perfect gathering spots.

Alexander Jackson Downing surely would have approved of Eyre's harmonious composition, for the entire plan reflected his ideals: it displayed where and how the family lived, and especially expressed W.K. Bixby's personality. Mohican Cottage also reflected Downing's definition of the three most important truths, which all domestic architecture should present: the "general" truth, as a dwelling house; the "local" truth as a country house; and the "specific truth" as a "cottage."[33] The estate responded to the

beautiful wildness of nature as found in the Adirondack wilderness at the turn of the century.

In addition, there was a sublime element to Mohican Cottage. There was an irregularity about it, for fantasy played a role in its allure. If taken out of its context, the house might almost appear to be a playhouse, with its overscaled elements and emphasized details. At nine inches, which Eyre referred to as a "special size," the clapboard sheathing is much wider than average. And the heavy modillions that line the cornice and interior of the tympanums are also oversized - larger than the dentils one might expect to see in their place, which further distinguishes Mohican Cottage from other Colonial Revival houses. This fantastic quality to the design emphasized the fact that Mohican Cottage was meant to have a resort atmosphere (see figure 52). Used for only a few months each year, and given the arduous journey necessary to reach this outpost, the house was meant to be a real "destination," where a parade of bathers, and sportsmen, and the sound of lively conversation broke down any sense of modesty and tradition. With its over-sized elements, ethereal design, and the echo of the main house in the outbuildings, Mohican Point must have welcomed the weary traveler from the city, heralding a season of sun and water and family, just as it does today.

Notes: Chapter 4

1. Seneca Ray Stoddard, Lake George, A Book of Today (Glens Falls, New York: S.R. Stoddard, 1879), 83.

2. William Holden Samson, Mohican Point on Lake George, the Summer Home of Mr. and Mrs. W.K. Bixby of St. Louis, Missouri (New York: Privately Printed, 1913), 43.

3. Ibid, 44.

4. Ibid, 44.

5. Conversation with Charles Houghton III February 10, 1990.

6. Charles C. Savage, Architecture of the Private Streets of St. Louis: The Architects and the Houses They Designed, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), 61.

7. Ibid, 150.

8. Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 376.

9. Betsy Fahlman, "Wilson Eyre in Detroit: The Charles Lang Freer House," Winterthur Portfolio 15, no. 3 (Autumn 1980):257.

10. Edward Teitelman and Betsy Fahlman, "Wilson Eyre and the Colonial Revival in Philadelphia," In Colonial Revival in America, edited by Alan Axelrod (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985), 76. In their footnote 5, Teitelman and Fahlman extensively quote Rhoads' dissertation, The Colonial Revival, 104-107.

11. Ibid, 76.

12. Ibid, 81-82.

13. Ibid, 81.

14. Conversations with George E. Thomas and Mark A. Hewitt, February, 1990.

15. Conversation with David G. De Long, October, 1989.

16. Ralph F. Bixby, ed., Diary of Lillian Tuttle Bixby and the Tuttles of Bolton Landing, (New York: privately printed, 1965), 27.

17. David G. De Long, ed., Historic American Buildings, New York, (New York, Garland Publishing, Inc., 1979), xv.

18. Ibid, xv.

19. Conversation with Edgar Caldwell, October, 1989.

20. Conversation with Edgar Caldwell, March 15, 1990.

21. Carl W. Condit, American Building Art: The Nineteenth Century, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 23.

22. House and Garden, "Mohican Cottage, Bolton-Landing-On-Lake-George, New York: Designed by Wilson Eyre," House and Garden 3, no. 1 (January 1903):27.

23. Ibid, 28.

24. Ibid, 29.

25. Ibid, 29.

26. Ibid, 29.

27. Ibid, 29.

28. Ibid, 30.

29. Wilson Eyre, Jr., "The Planning of Country Houses," The American Architect and Building News 93, no. 1684 (April 1, 1908):108.

30. Ibid, 108.

31. Ibid, 108.

32. House and Garden, 30.

33. Alexander Jackson Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, (D. Appleton & Company, 1850, Reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1969).

CHAPTER 5: MOHICAN COTTAGE: 1905-PRESENT

Mohican Cottage remained virtually unchanged until 1905, when Eyre made several minor alterations to the home, noted on his list of projects in the Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects. The most important modification that can be documented through early photographs is the enclosure of the portico at the juncture of the south and the east wings. Until 1905, it had been an open porch. Subsequently, Eyre designed a screened-in porch, or sleeping porch, as an extension to the master bedroom on the second floor. Underneath, he created a sun room as an enclosed extension of the living room. These changes conformed to Eyre's ideals for "The Planning of Country Houses." Eyre explained, in the conclusion of his two-part article for American Architect and Building News, "Porches in connection with sleeping rooms are much to be desired, but, as they should be covered, there should not be too many, as they keep out the sunlight."[1] In keeping with his model Eyre included just one such room in his alterations. "A conservatory or glassed-in porch, connected with one or more of the rooms and placed on the south side of the house, adds great value to the beauty of the rooms."[2] Eyre's "ideals," as outlined in the articles, seem so closely geared to

Mohican Cottage, that they suggest the house was very nearly his archetype for these pieces.

The next major transformation to the home occurred within the fabric of the Bixby family itself. Physical alterations to the house were made as a result of changes within the family structure, namely rapid growth. This expansion will be broken down into two periods: 1905-1959, and 1959 to the present. For clarity, in this chapter, the author will adopt a genealogist's technique. In an attempt to focus in on the confusing issue of generations, each family member's name will be followed by a number in parentheses to denote generation. For the purposes of this thesis, William Keeney Bixby and Lillian Tuttle Bixby were the first generation.

An important development in the history of the estate has been the gradual dispersal of the family away from the central Mohican Cottage. This began around 1925 when one of Bixby's children acquired the adjacent great estate. More recently, a member of the fourth generation constructed a single family home on nearby Potter Hill. Mohican Cottage became more symbolic than practical, as the next generations came of age and continued the tradition of returning, summer after summer, to Bolton Landing.

William Keeney and Lillian Tuttle Bixby had seven children (the second generation to stay at Mohican Cottage): six went on to build families. Those six branches soon

began to grow, and foreseeing the impact on Mohican Cottage, members of the second generation began procuring properties around the house. Indeed, by 1925, William Hoxie Bixby(2) (1888-1967), had already purchased the adjacent parcel, with its majestic Victorian home, "The Rocks," directly to the south of Mohican Point. Harold MacMillan Bixby(2) (1890-1965) followed suit and bought property on Potter Hill, directly to the west; Ralph Foster Bixby(2) (1899-1978) bought the Tuttle homestead on Federal Hill; Ruth Bixby Stevens(2) (1894-1972) settled into "The Cottage," a house to the north of Mohican Point; and Donald Church Bixby(2) (1901-1948) chose to settle into the caretakers house, "Nearby". Thus the Bixby presence in Bolton Landing spread, adding new names to the family's retreat, which had begun as Mohican Cottage. "The Rocks", "Topside," "The Cottage," "The Farm," "Nearby," and "Fallen Arches" are all names which perhaps only the family can define, though they conjure up specific shared images and memories. Thus the first stage, 1905-1959, was one marked by the family extending its real estate holdings and procuring additional residences.

Mohican Cottage continued unmodified until fifty years later, in 1959, when Eric Defty(3), architect and in-law, drew up plans to convert the open house into six separate apartments. The original plan of the house, with its reliance on domestic help and somewhat luxurious features,

such as the gun room, had outlived its purpose. By 1959, the Bixby family numbered nearly one hundred members. Six apartments, each outfitted with its own living room, bedrooms, kitchen, and bathroom suited their needs.

In 1959, preserving architect Wilson Eyre, Jr.'s design was not of paramount importance to the family. Preservation, and certainly Eyre, were not well known subjects. Thus the sympathetic rehabilitation of Mohican Cottage happened somewhat by accident. Indeed, the best preservation efforts are often by chance. The cruciform plan made possible schemes to preserve the loved communal rooms, while providing space for growing families. Eric Defty adopted minimal changes, respecting Eyre's original design, and connected clusters of bedrooms to form several of the apartments. Each floor of the service wing became an apartment, and the library on the first floor was also converted into an apartment. All totalled, two apartments were created on the first floor and four on the second. The major changes Defty made were to the first floor, for that floor had contained the library wing and the service wing, and both of these were completely adapted. The architect converted the opulent library into a living room and two bedrooms for one of the downstairs apartments, and the kitchen, cold closet, and gun room into the other apartment.

The second floor remained essentially the same: bedroom suites combined to form two apartments; the servants

quarters and sewing room created a third apartment; and the master bedroom suite formed the fourth apartment on the second floor. In a sense, Defty maintained Eyre's paradigm that each guestroom should have its own bathroom "at any rate, not more than two rooms should be dependent on one bath."[3] Minor changes included cutting off the small back staircase and removing the balustered balcony which extended off of the sewing room. The loss of the balcony constitutes the one alteration which is irreversible.

The majority of the changes of 1959 were in the form of additions: new partitions, kitchens, and bathrooms. Essentially, these additions could be considered reversible, for they can be removed to return to the original fabric of the house. However, this would not be a particularly useful or practical possibility in the late twentieth century. Defty successfully worked around the shell of the home preventing major walls from being knocked down. Although there are indeed six separate apartments where there was once one main house, the communal sense of the home remains. Doors to the apartments are often left open and never locked, children scamper in and out of these spaces at will and the sense of barriers scarcely exists in the house. Though the continuous flow of interior spaces which Eyre planned is somewhat hampered, the house still maintains the original open feel (see figures 53-65).

We have already witnessed a second wave of expansion. "Alongside" has been added to "Topside," and although traditionally the family has expanded into homes that are already standing, five new homes for members of the Bixby family have been built over the past fifteen years. Others are destined to follow. This second surge of growth has included the purchasing of peaks, and the safeguarding of lots against development. Recently, at a change in generation, the family almost sold the magnificent estate "The Rocks;" fortunately W.H. Bixby's grandson, Charles Houghton[4] rescued the home and purchased the estate. The Bixby family has radiated out from Mohican Cottage, its fulcrum, and now occupies a total of fourteen houses throughout Bolton Landing.

The stories go on as family members seek creative solutions to the capacity issue, as we outgrow one house after the other. Discussions continue, with family members looking into building new spaces. A cul-de-sac plan on Potter Hill has been seriously considered. There are now three full generations (the third fourth and fifth generations to gravitate to Mohican Point), who share the family homes each summer. The issue of expanding homes to accommodate "new growth" is an important one. Just as Roger Edgecomb created an inn from his home back in 1800, the family, too must continually evaluate available space. Thus far, we all seem to fit each year at family meeting time,

which is the first weekend in August and notoriously the most crowded.

The more fundamental changes have occurred in regards to how the house is now managed. When Mohican Cottage was built, W.K. Bixby had complete control over the running of the property. Now that control is dispersed among almost one hundred shareholders in "Home Place, Inc.," a corporation set up to run the estate. This arrangement is unique in estate management, and the logistics of this administration are quite complicated. William D. Hawkins(3), businessman and in-law, outlined the whole establishment of Home Place, Inc. in a 1986 summary presented to the shareholders at their annual meeting. This document is reprinted in appendix A, for it would be a great disservice to try and re-write Hawkins' narrative, which is both colorful and informative. W.D. Hawkins master-minded the corporation, since he is the one in the family who intuitively understands business matters, and comprehensibly explains exactly how things work within Home Place, Inc. As a saavy, compassionate businessman, W.D. Hawkins is one of the valuable resources the family has, having just recently stepped down, after decades of service, from his position as President of Home Place, Inc.

The family is also very fortunate to embrace Edgar Caldwell(4), another valuable resource in the safeguarding of the estate. Caldwell has sensitively kept an eye on the

preservation of the house for over a decade. He routinely confronts structural problems such as the sinking foundation. While the house successfully impresses upon the viewer its low silhouette, in accordance to Eyre's intent, that very element has created numerous problems for Caldwell as he endeavors to preserve the home. The house sinks into the soil a little more every year, and Caldwell climbs down into the crawl space every spring to assess the condition. Often he is greeted by flooded areas and an infiltration of clay soil, which makes working underground nearly impossible. However, he perseveres, and each summer the house welcomes throngs of visitors. With exemplary members represented by Hawkins and Caldwell, and the many other individuals who care deeply about the future of Mohican Point, the family should be able to continue using the home for generations to come.

Individuals are not the only available resource. We have access to an exceptional collection of original documents. Most researchers working on historic structures do not have the benefit of finding the types of information we have at our disposal. For example, we have extensive photographic records, an original plan of the first floor, and we even have a book written about Mohican Cottage. While a number of important documents have fallen through the cracks, we are, nevertheless, extremely lucky to have

the amount of records and documentary evidence available through the family.

First, the house, as our primary document, is still family-owned, an occurrence which is all too rare. Other nearby Bixby family homes, "The Farm" and "The Rocks," for example, intrinsically add to the history of the property; they too remain in the family, a beneficial and serendipitous situation for a future preservation plan. Beyond this, we maintain a fine collection of original documents which continue to shed light on the history of the property, the history of the area, and the history of the family. We must augment these valuable resources with provisions for the future.

Traditionally, the family has adopted a rather "laissez faire" attitude towards some of our original documents. After all, Mohican Cottage is not a museum, the structure is a home to be lived in, and original objects are to be held. The original billiard room furnishings such as the table, leather chairs, lighting fixtures, and the stuffed animal trophies on the walls, all create an ambience of adventure, a set for lively behavior on most summer evenings. The set is transformed when the billiard table itself, covered in white linen, functions as a buffet for wedding banquets. While we maintain this "lived in" approach, we must concurrently look towards the future...the family will need its treasures and original documentation to continue the

cyclical maintenance and protection of the house. Although this goes against the grain of our customary approach, surely family members would quickly adjust to safeguarding some of our historically significant valuables.

The family should be commended for its basic tactic: repair rather than replace, for maintenance constitutes the most fundamental means of preserving the home. We already have a schedule set up, and we should continue the routine, expanding our efforts with further study. Repairs should guide us - we should make them towards restoration. As repairs are needed, suitable professionals should be consulted, and the applicable recommendation should then be adopted. For example, when the home next needs to be repainted, we should do a paint analysis to determine the original paint color of the house. The following framework is an example of a Preservation Plan which would conceivably serve our family's needs and those of Mohican Cottage:

Phase 1 - High Priority - Immediate Intervention

Phase 2 - Priority - Necessary Intervention

Phase 3 - Long Range - Desirable Intervention

Phase 1: High Priority

For Phase 1, we are already well on our way. This preliminary stage would entail thorough documentation of Mohican Cottage, which we have already begun with this thesis. This phase would also require establishing a maintenance schedule, which is already in place. In terms of further recommendations for immediate intervention, a complete visual survey would make a solid, logical first step. The visual survey would necessitate the following steps:

1. Record the condition of the fabric of the structure, and identify any structural faults in the building.
2. Report any alterations to the fabric of the structure

This preliminary, thorough, visual inspection would serve as a foundation for future studies - the first in a series, ideally conducted annually.

Phase 2: Priority

Moving from immediate intervention to necessary intervention, the establishment of a family archive is of key importance. The documents we own should be kept under archival conditions, protected for future generations. For instance, the photographs from 1870 should be mounted on acid-free paper, and the Hotel Register from 1883 should be properly handled (modern-day visitors have been known to sign in). We would first need to consult a specialist. An

appointment with the curator of the architectural archives at Penn or Columbia could be arranged.

Some examples of what we would want to include in the collection follow:

Primary Sources:

-Mohican House hotel register

-scrapbooks and early photos of Mohican House and Mohican Cottage

-William Keeney Bixby correspondence and diaries

-Copies and photos of all Eyre's original drawings and plans for the home

-Photos of family taken around the house

-Mohican House Brochure

-Diary of Lillian Tuttle

-Journal articles published on Mohican Cottage

-Journal and newspaper articles on Wilson Eyre, Jr. and on William Keeney Bixby

-Set of maps of the region and estate

-Memorabilia, i.e. train tickets, programs, wedding announcements

-Set of Eric Defty's plans for 1959 alterations

-Family member's written recollections,
i.e. Ralph Bixby's[2] descriptions of his siblings

Secondary Sources:

-Books that mention the home

-Books that mention W.K. Bixby's homes in St. Louis

-Set of Seneca Ray Stoddard's Guidebooks and other period guidebooks for the Lake George region
-Book: Mohican Point by William H. Samson

The archive would be a family collaboration, a means for consolidating all the pertinent records from the different Bixby family branches. The collection would be carefully annotated - the source of each article would be identified.

In addition to the archive, a complete structural survey is an imperative measure. This would have to be done by a competent structural engineer, familiar with regional architecture and homes from the beginning of the century. At this first stage, there would be no need to open up the building in any way. This would launch our efforts towards structural monitoring. The reasons for structural monitoring are twofold, both theoretical and technical. On the theoretical side, monitoring would help us to know the history of Mohican Cottage better. And on the technical side, monitoring would help determine trends useful in detecting future damage, and give instrumental indications for the current rate of movement. Together this would provide definite data for the organization of records. The possible outcome from structural monitoring might be, for instance, that structural movements are taking place but are only seasonal movements, in which case probably no

intervention would be necessary - or that progressive structural movements are taking place, but at such a slow rate that repairs are not necessary. However, if structural movements are taking place at a fast rate, repairs would be essential.[4] Of course, we already have structural monitoring going on, which Edgar Caldwell looks after. However, we might want to institute a system now, a monitoring device or technique which could be used simply and continually, that would form the basis for future assessments. Embarking on a progressive, ongoing evaluation would be useful to help determine repair needs in the future.

The first two phases could be implemented in the near future, with a consensus at the next annual meeting.

Phase 3: Long Range

Phase 3 would include further study that would be desirable to carry through. This could be spread out over an extended period of time. The many avenues of research on the estate which remain to be explored include the following topics:

-W.K. Bixby's relationship with Charles Lang Freer - The Freer collection holds correspondence between the two men.

-W.K. Bixby's Adrian, Michigan heritage.

-Documentation of the outlying buildings: i.e. Nearby, Fallen Arches, The Cottage.

-Documentation of the grounds - history of Mohican Point Landscape - i.e. trees and site features.

We already have the "files" for the basis of these topics for research. These files could be kept open in the archive to spark interest for future generations. Other Phase 3 recommendations include commissioning a complete set of measured drawings of the house as it exists today. These drawings could then be used as base documents on which to record current conditions. For example, every few years, we could begin with copies of the measured drawings, and record changes on those drawings. The drawings would provide a standard foundation on which to record changes that have taken place. Thorough measured drawings would enable us to document every step we take.

Conducting a paint analysis would constitute another advantageous step. This could be done unobtrusively to determine original paint colors of interior communal areas (living room, billiard room, and halls) and the exterior.

Another possibility would be the establishment of our own structural monitoring system. There are simplistic inexpensive controls we could set up to monitor such deformations as cracks and water damage (causes of dampness and cracks). For instance, a simple mortar telltale could

tell us how far and how rapidly a crack has spread along a wall.

A few other small interventions might include framing the photographs of Wilson Eyre Jr.'s original drawings for the four communal interior spaces: living room, dining room, library, and billiard room, and placing the framed pictures in their corresponding rooms so that family and visitors could see what the rooms originally looked like. In addition, we could consolidate the family tree somewhat. We would of course preserve the original, Elizabeth Bixby Hawkins[3] family tree which extends over the entrance to apartment number two. However, the family is growing beyond the space provided on the wall. Thus, in addition to the tree we already have, we could have a copy of what genealogists use to record family generations.

A final avenue to explore would be at the financial end. For example, what sorts of tax benefits are available to us - could we possibly plug into easements?

The phases could be adopted on a gradual basis. As repairs are needed, we could look into further explorations. It must be emphasized that there is room for flexibility. The recommendations do not necessarily have to follow the exact sequence outlined here. This should be kept in mind when reviewing these suggestions. Another important note is that these guidelines are catered to the family and what is reasonably expected that the family can maintain. We must

remember, through all of this, that we should work with humility.[5] What we do now, future generations will study. Thus we must be aware of our relationship to Mohican Cottage, and our place in the history of the house, as we make our mark on it. The objective is to intervene minimally with the awareness of potential reversibility of our gestures.

Notes: Chapter 5

1. Wilson Eyre, Jr., "The Planning of Country Houses (Concluded)," The American Architect and Building News 93, no. 1685 (April 8, 1908):116.

2. Ibid, 116.

3. Wilson Eyre, Jr., "The Planning of Country Houses." The American Architect and Building News 93, no. 1684 (April 1, 1908):108.

4. Alejandro Alva, engineer, lecture at ICCROM, Rome, August 1989.

5. Jean Marie Teutonico, historic preservationist, lecture at ICCROM, Rome, August 1989.

CONCLUSION

Mohican Cottage is nearing its first century, which is unusual for a vacation house. While many similar homes have suffered fates ranging from demolition to extensive adaptive use, Mohican Cottage has endured as a Bixby family residence. In 1990, it still possesses its integrity, its grandeur, its site. In Architecture, Ambition and Americans, Wayne Andrews considered the destinies of stately mansions built during "The Age of Elegance, 1872-1913." He remarked: "Very few palaces have been built since 1913...[and] what is sadder by far, you cannot possibly count all the extraordinary buildings planned for formal living which have been scrapped in our informal era. Of the survivors, many have been mauled by real estate speculators anxious to modernize a masterpiece; others, more fortunate, have been made over to suit the needs of every conceivable organization."[1]

This thesis should serve as a starting block upon which to build further understanding of our ancestral home. We have the beginnings of a preservation effort here in these pages. The year 2001 will mark the one-hundredth anniversary of Mohican Cottage. By then we should have some of these guidelines in place. Above all our family should not be afraid of the term preservation. We are endeavoring

to conserve the structure, not return it to its original state when W.K. Bixby lived there; that would mean, among many changes, dismantling all the apartments, which is impractical. However, we do want to insure that the house will last. Cyclical maintenance is our strongest ally.

At our annual meeting of Home Place Inc., the status of Mohican Cottage should be the first order of business. We must hand this sense of priority, and morality down to our children. With great foresight and taste, W.K. Bixby gave to his family an enduring legacy by building Mohican Cottage. With similar foresight, we can return the gift by renewing and doubling our efforts to preserve his vision.

Notes: Conclusion

1. Wayne Andrews, Architecture, Ambition and Americans, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), 203.

APPENDIX A: MOHICAN POINT AND THE HOME PLACE CORPORATION

Since this meeting marks the end of a chapter in the history of Mohican Point and the Home Place Corporation, it seems appropriate to review and include as a permanent record with the minutes of this meeting the events leading up to the corner we are about to turn. To most of our generation this is a twice-told tale but one worth telling for the benefit of the younger members of our group not familiar with early history.

If we go back about 50 years, the people in my generation were completely in the dark about just how the maintenance of this place was handled, what the financial arrangements were, or in fact anything about what was keeping the place going. It was all taken on faith and the place went along from year to year, deteriorating slightly but staying pretty much the same. To give you the whole story, Grandfather Bixby set up a trust in 1921 to maintain Mohican Point. This was to terminate with the death of him and Grandmother Bixby, unless upon the death of the last of them a majority of the seven children elected to continue the trust and so indicated in writing. After 1921 the trust was continued in three-year increments apparently to avoid any far-reaching decisions by continuing it for a longer period. Having as you all know, a congenital mistrust for

lawyers, the family simply handled these extensions of the trust directly with the St. Louis Union Trust Co. and, as a technical matter, the trust really lapsed three times during the period from 1931 to 1966 - that is, they forgot about making the renewal until a month or two after the trust had technically expired. However, the Trust Co. being very flexible when dealing with Uncle Will, quietly ignored this little legal problem. Anyway, after Uncle Harold died in 1965, I wrote a letter in April 1966 to "19+ and Elders" (these two generations), suggesting that something really ought to be done to tidy up the ownership of the property since it was already comprising so many undivided interests that it would be virtually impossible to dispose of the property at any time in the future without a year's worth of legal work. As a result of this it was agreed to incorporate, and just 20 years ago last week the incorporation was completed and 12,000 shares of stock issued, each of the now-remaining six families exchanging their interest in the real estate for 2,000 shares of stock.

At that first meeting of July 29, 1966 seven directors were elected including Bill Bixby, Jr., Ralph Bixby and Glen Caffry, none of whom are still with us. Uncle Will was unanimously elected president. A year later the latest three-year renewal of the trust expired after our annual meeting in July of that year, 1967, when Uncle Will resigned and I was elected president, Harvey and I pleaded with him

to execute a renewal, not for three years but for 20 years for the reason that at that moment there were only four of the original seven children left, forming that very necessary majority authorized to extend the trust. He demurred, saying that there was too much capital tied up in the trust and that something should be done about distributing part of it before any long-term plan was made, but we said - "how about getting a 20 year extension signed anyway while all four of the signatories were here and then deciding later if they wanted to modify the plan in any way." He agreed that this might be a good idea. Six weeks later he was dead. Then the story really gets interesting. Had they or had they not signed the extension and, if so, where was it, because no one had seen it. About a month later the instrument, duly signed by the four signatories, surfaced in a briefcase that Bill Bixby was digging through in connection with his father's estate. So the extension was properly filed with the Bank, but this is how close we came to the whole thing folding up in 1967.

Then for the second time in two years the realization came that estate tax was going to have to be paid on Uncle Will's 1/6th interest in the Home Place Trust just as it had to be paid in Uncle Harold's case although the taxable value was tied up in the trust and was not and could not be distributed to his heirs. When Uncle Donald died in 1948, Uncle Will in his persuasive fashion conned the Internal

Revenue Service into accepting that his share of this trust was not properly includable in his estate since, individually, he had no control over it. The trust was continued by will of the majority of the children so therefore he had nothing to say about it individually and therefore it was not part of his estate. This bill of goods was sold but by 1965 the IRS had gotten a lot smarter, as well as more avaricious, and there was one nasty little question added to the estate tax return - "Did the decedent have any beneficial interest in a Trust?" The answer to this had to be "yes" but we advanced in Uncle Harold's case the same argument that Uncle Will had used almost 20 years earlier. In rejecting this claimed exemption the IRS came up with a court case which, incredible as it may seem, was an exact duplicate of the situation we had here, including, believe it or not, the number of seven children. Again it was up to a majority of the children to continue the trust and the IRS took the position that, since at the time they signed the renewal each individual had the option of declining to sign it, he had at that moment discretionary control over his share of the trust and therefore it was part of his estate. This case, Sexton vs. U.S., went as far as the Circuit Court of Appeals where the IRS position was upheld and the Supreme Court declined to review it. This was pretty convincing documentation and we sorrowfully accepted the tax liability, which was staggering.

It was now obvious that Uncle Will's estate and predictably the estate of each future decedent was looking at a very heavy tax on their share of the trust which was actually not a disposable asset. To lighten the burden we sought how to distribute perhaps half of the trust, leaving enough income for at least minimum support of the Home Place. The Trust Company could not legally make such a distribution without a Court Order and to petition the Court for an uncontested order required approval of 100% of the then beneficiaries of the trust. If anyone declined to approve the distribution it would mean litigation which could take several years and a considerable legal expense even if the outcome was favorable. We had many long, and sometimes acrimonious conferences with Uncle Steve, but he remained firmly of the opinion that we could not afford to make such a distribution without jeopardizing the continuity of the operation and therefore would not let Aunt Ruth approve the petition. At the annual meeting in 1968 in this very room we got hung up on this one issue. We seemed to have reached an impasse when Frances Caldwell asked "How many votes does it take to make it unanimous?" and the answer was 13. She said "how many affirmative votes do we now have?" and I said "12". In the deafening silence that followed, Aunt Ruth, in the soft uncertain voice that she had by that time said very clearly "I want to sign it". It

was indeed a moment of unforgettable drama, but the result was we were off and running.

On December 19, 1968 the Circuit Court of St. Louis heard the case, granted our petition not only to distribute 45% of the corpus but approved also the distribution of the very securities that we requested, those showing the lowest yield. The result was to decrease the tax liability of future decedent beneficiaries by almost 50% but to reduce our expected income by only 25% to about $17,000 a year. I was able to assure the judge that on the basis of the commitment expressed at that summer's annual meeting it would be acceptable to everyone to make an annual contribution so that it would be possible to cover the annual expenses and maintain the place as it had been.

By working diligently with the St. Louis Trust Co. (now the Centerre Trust Co.), the custodians came to understand and accept the long-range purposes that we had in mind and their careful management of the trust, plus inflation, has resulted after 20 years in increasing the invested total to considerably more than it was before the distribution and the annual income to about $50,000.

Over the same period of time I think everyone is aware of a change in the perception of this institution. Twenty years ago there was sort of a subconscious feeling that one of these days we were all going to turn into pumpkins so we might as well live it up, let things go, and make the best

of a deteriorating physical facility. For instance, the boat house was slowly sinking so that the dock was completely awash and the two halves were separating at the valley. There was a serious suggestion that we tear down half of the boat house and get along without it. The western chimney on the Big House was badly cracked and it was suggested that we tear that down since we really didn't need it. The front porch on Fallen Arches was slowly sagging so we might as well tear it off. Instead, we strengthened the boat house by pulling it back together, raised the entire dock one foot out of the water with new stone cribs and straightened up the sagging pillars. We repaired the chimney on the Big House, repainted the whole house and put on a new roof. We put a new porch on Fallen Arches, rebuilt the tennis court and the dam at the pond, and repainted every building on the place. All of this was in the spirit of a new vision that culminated in the unanimous approval of a new trust to take effect next year with the realization that what we do now in the way of maintenance and improvement is for the benefit of our children and grandchildren.

W.D. Hawkins

Annual Meeting August 2, 1986

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Figure 1. Map of New York State.

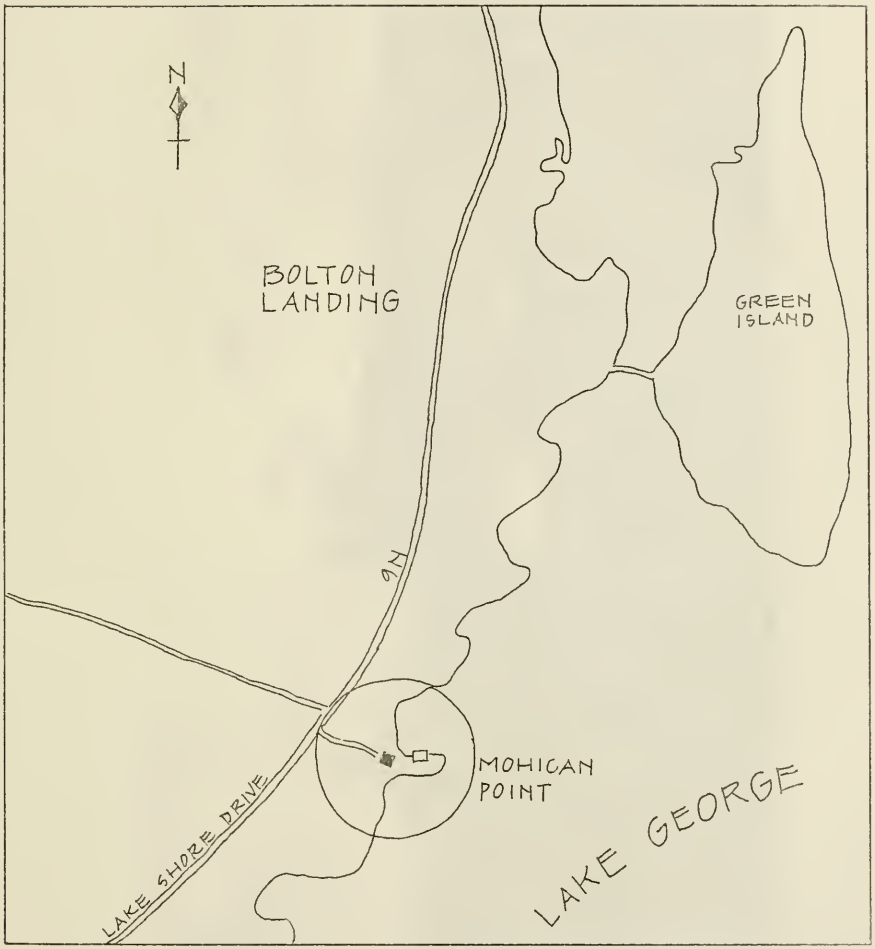


Figure 2. Map of Bolton Landing Area.

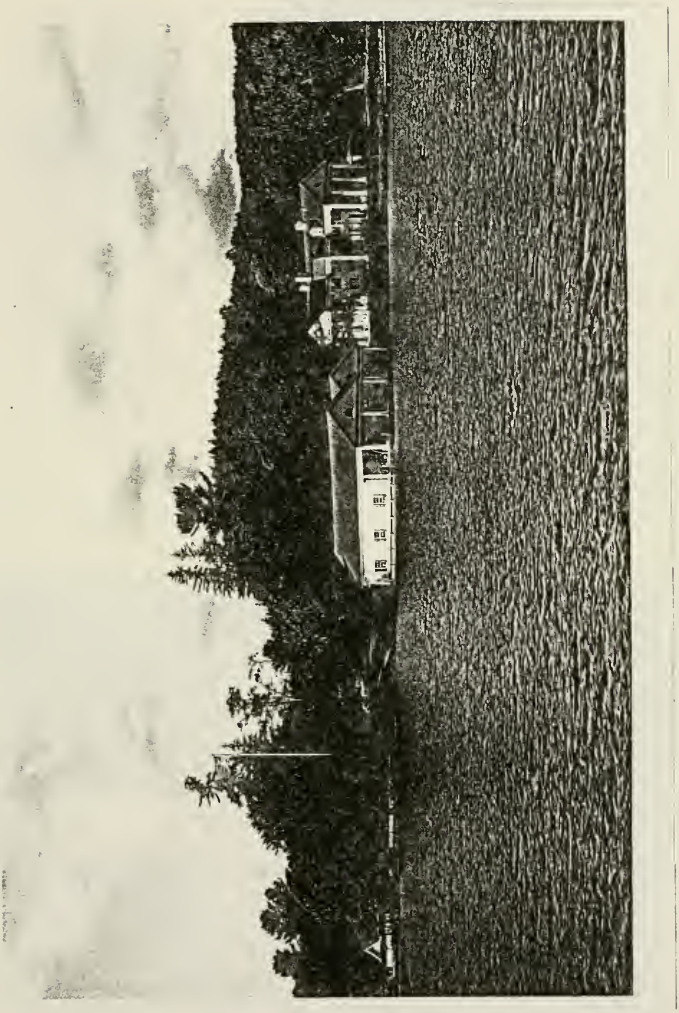


Figure 3. Overall View of Estate. 1989.

Figure 4. William Keeney Bixby

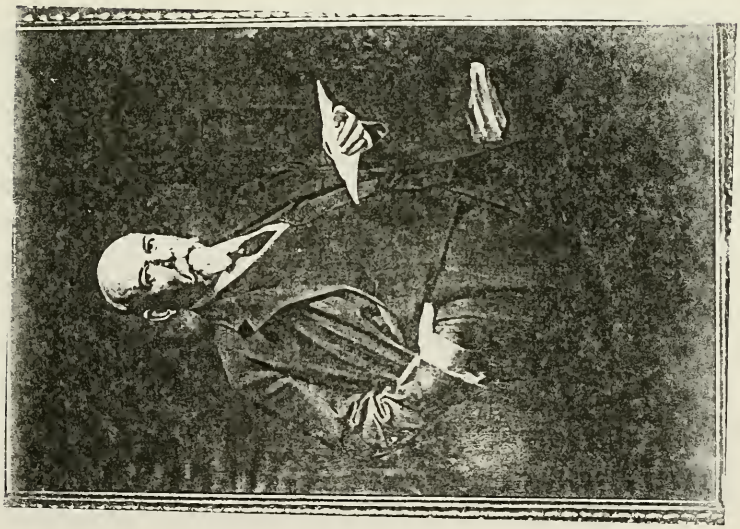
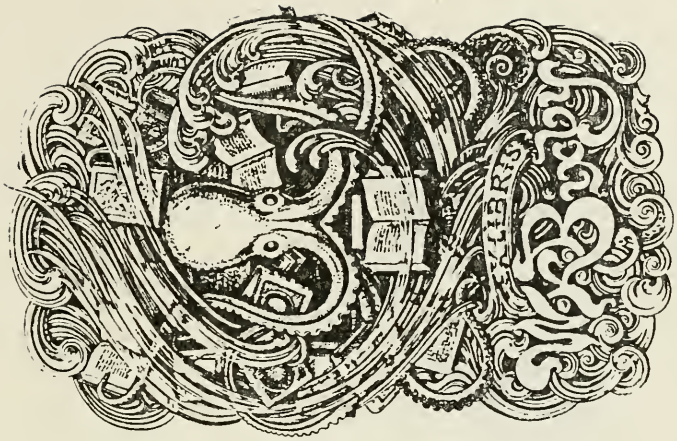


Figure 5. William Keeney Bixby. Portrait.



Bookplate of W. K. Bixby

Figure 6. William K. Bixby Bookplate.

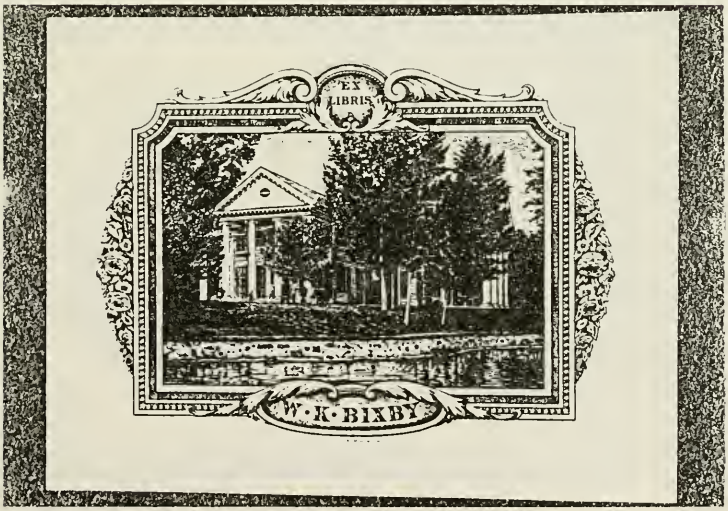


Figure 7. William K. Bixby Bookplate.

Figure 8. Wilson Eyre, Jr.

Figure 9. Wilson Eyre, Jr. Pastel.

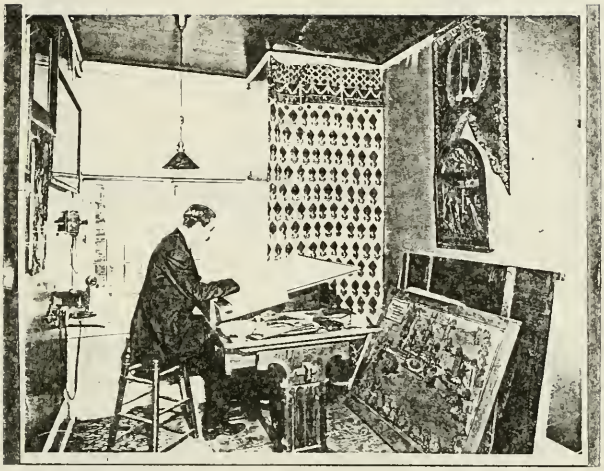


Figure 10. Wilson Eyre, Jr. in his Atelier

Figure 11. Mohican House Symbol.

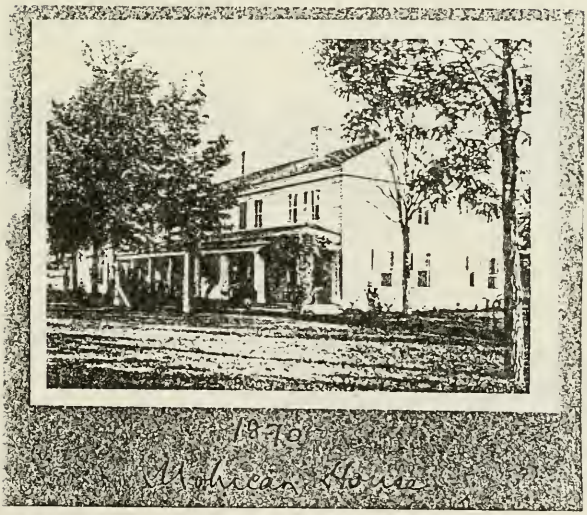


Figure 12. Mohican House c. 1870.

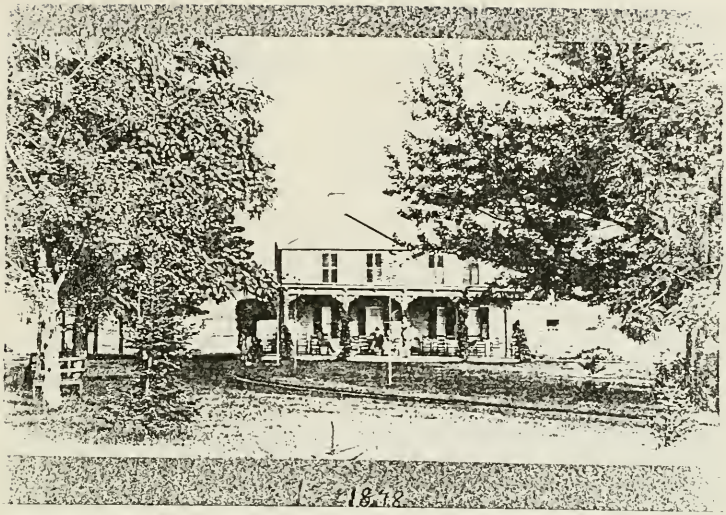


Figure 13. Mohican House c. 1878.

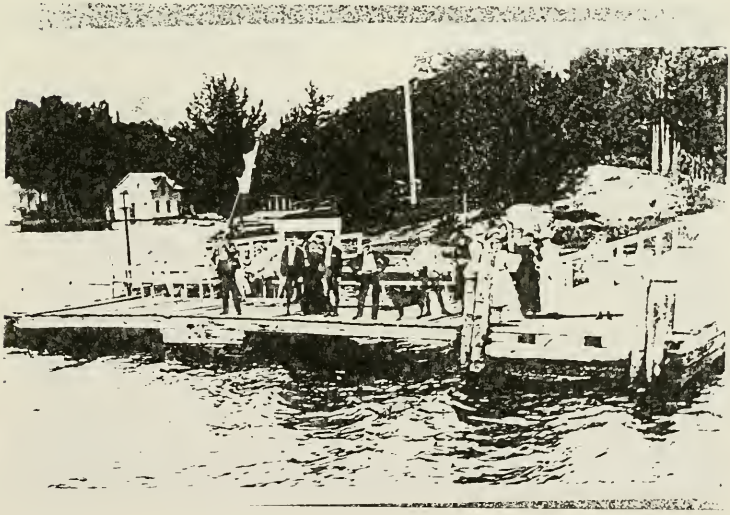


Figure 14. Mohican House Dock c. 1880.

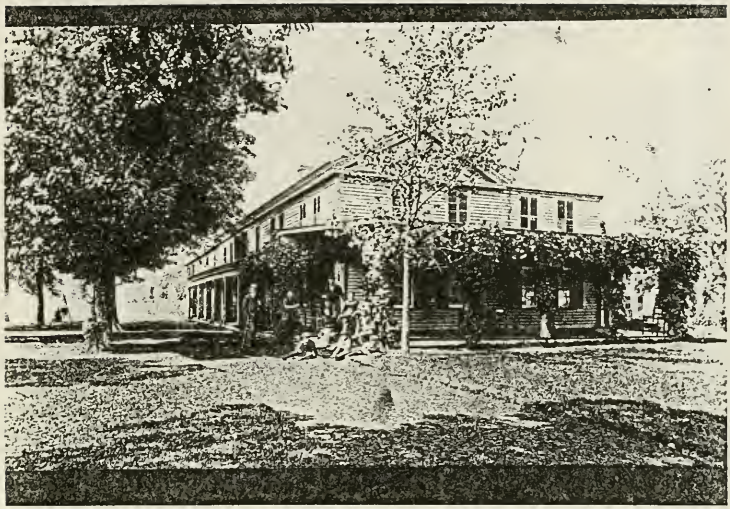


Figure 15. Mohican House c. 1880.

Figure 16. Mohican House c. 1886.

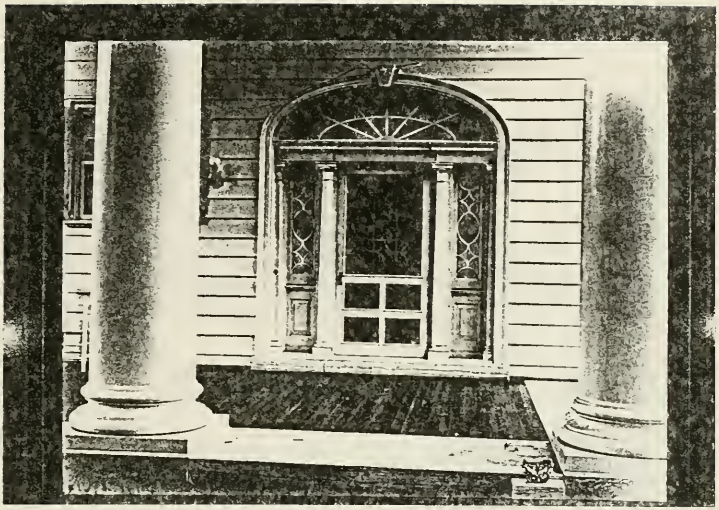


Figure 17. Mohican Cottage Entrance as Illustrated in House and Garden 1903.

Figure 18. Mohican Cottage South Facade as Illustrated in House and Garden 1903.

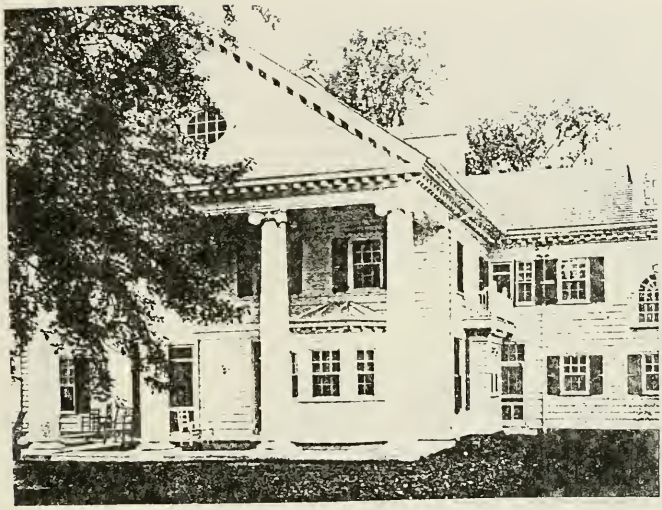


Figure 19. Mohican Cottage North Facade as Illustrated in House and Garden 1903.

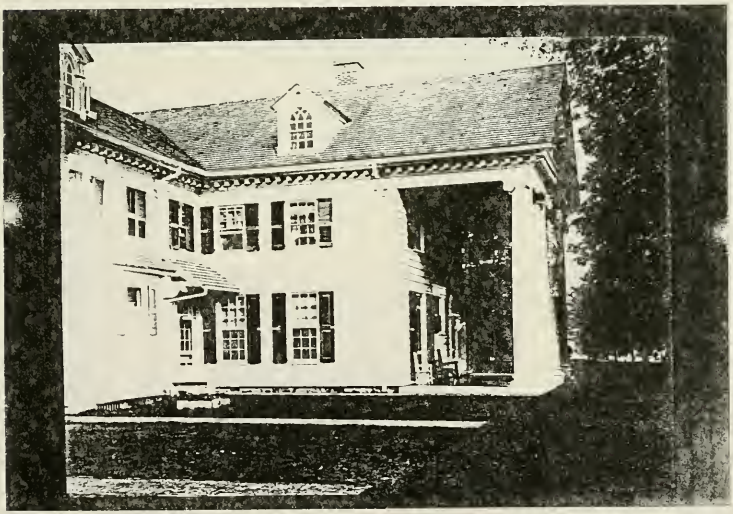


Figure 20. Mohican Cottage Southwest Facade as Illustrated in House and Garden 1903.

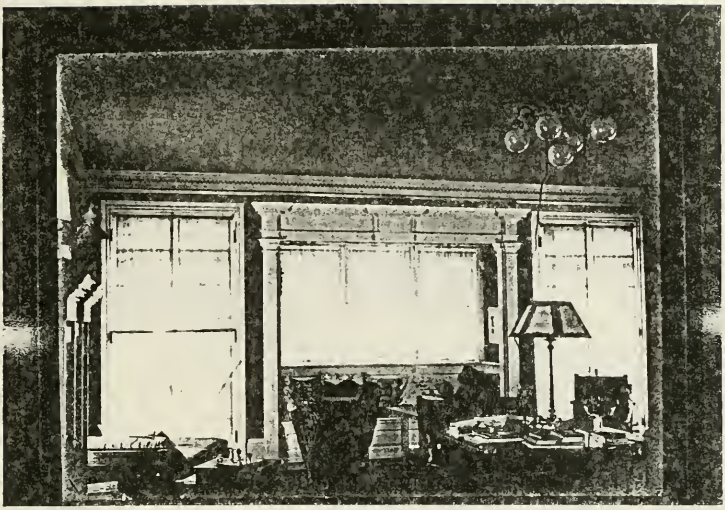


Figure 21. Mohican Cottage Living Room as Illustrated in House and Garden 1903.

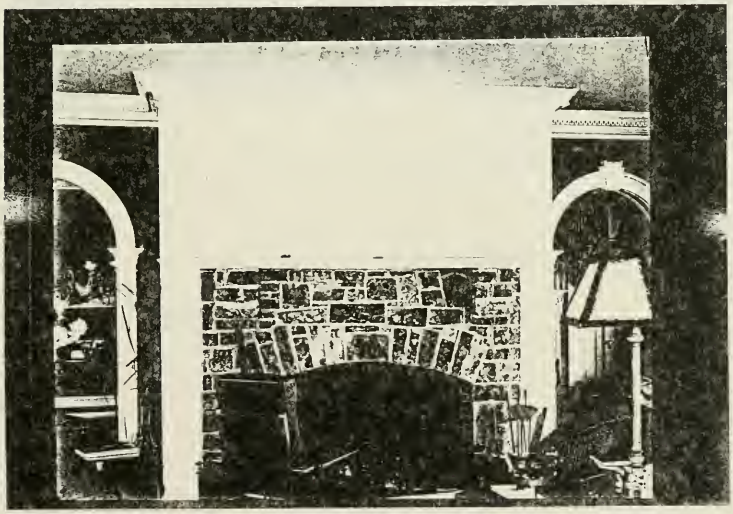


Figure 22. Mohican Cottage Living Room Fireplace as Illustrated in House and Garden 1903.

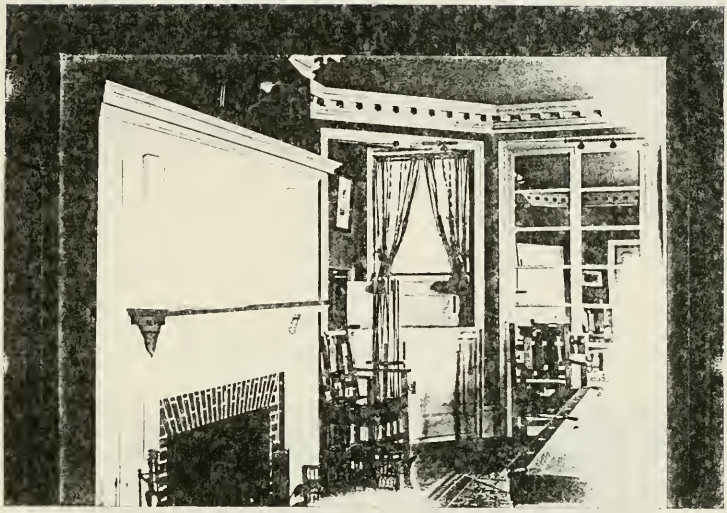


Figure 23. Mohican Cottage Billiard Room as Illustrated in House and Garden 1903.

AN EARLY VIEW OF THE HOUSE, SHOWING THE ARCHED DRIVEWAY

Figure 24. McKim, Mead and White's "The Orchard" as Illustrated in House and Garden 1903.

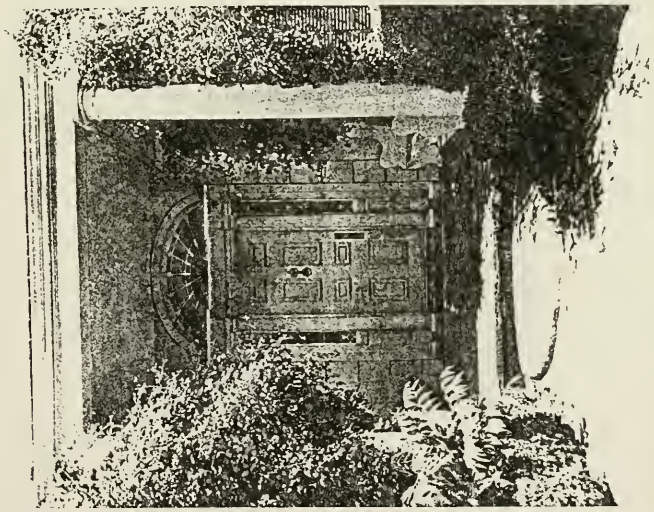


Figure 25. McKim, Mead and White's "The Orchard" as Illustrated in House and Garden 1903.

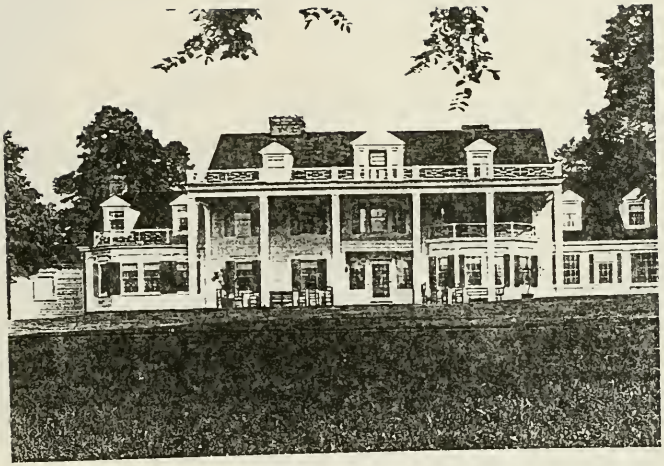


Figure 26. McKim, Mead and White's "Hill-Stead" as Illustrated in Antiques 1988.

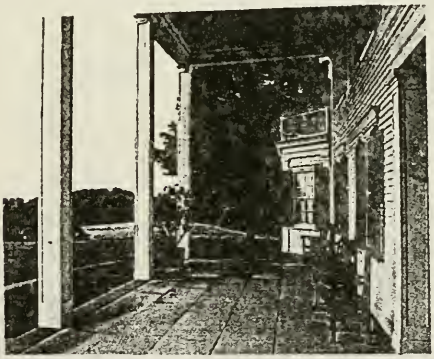


Figure 27. McKim, Mead and White's "Hill-Stead" as Illustrated in Antiques 1988.

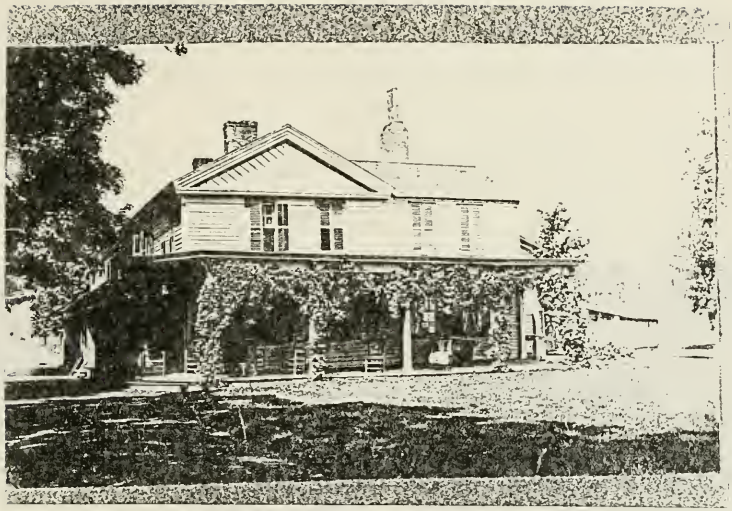


Figure 28. Mohican House c. 1901.

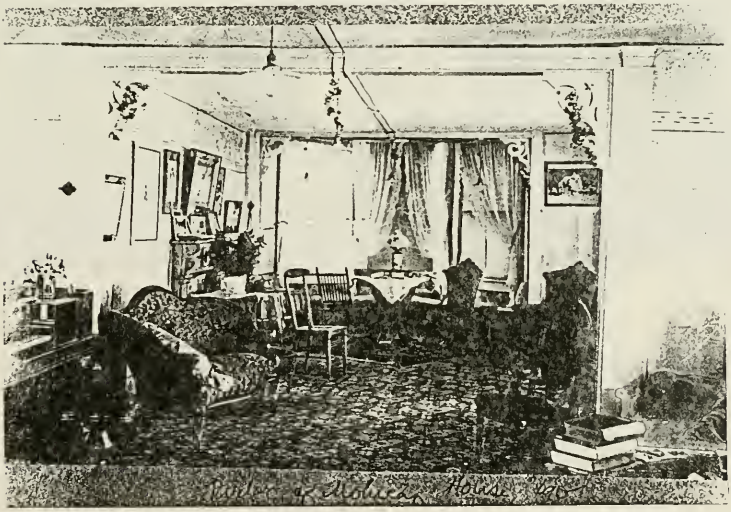


Figure 29. Mohican House Parlor c. 1901.

Figure 30. Bixby Family in Front of Mohican House c. 1901.

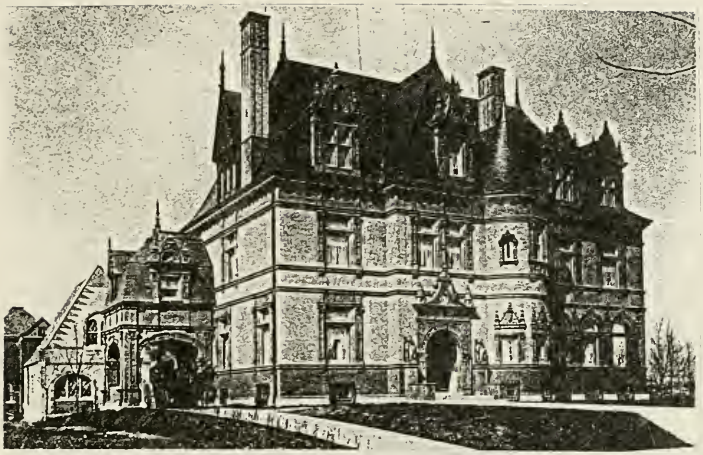


Fig. 58. W. Albert Swasey, William K. Bixby house, 1893, 13 Portland Place.

Figure 31. William K. Bixby House, St. Louis, Missouri.

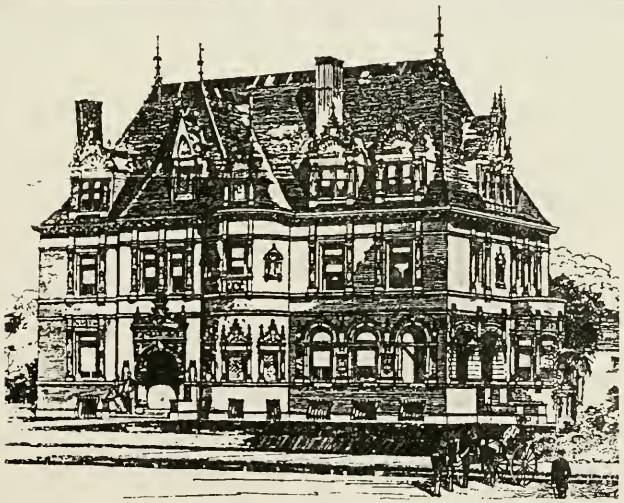


Figure 32. W. Albert Swasey, Architect, Drawing for W.K. Bixby House, St. Louis, Missouri.

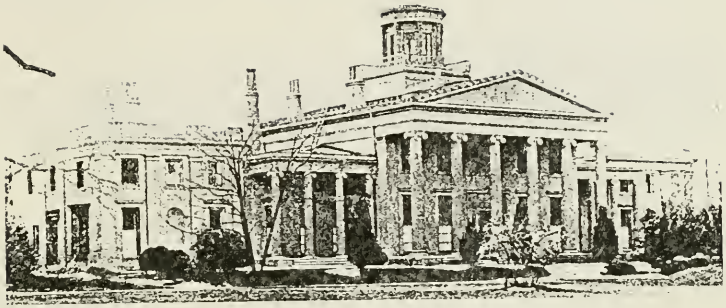


Figure 33. Thomas Ustick Walter's "Carpenter Mansion."

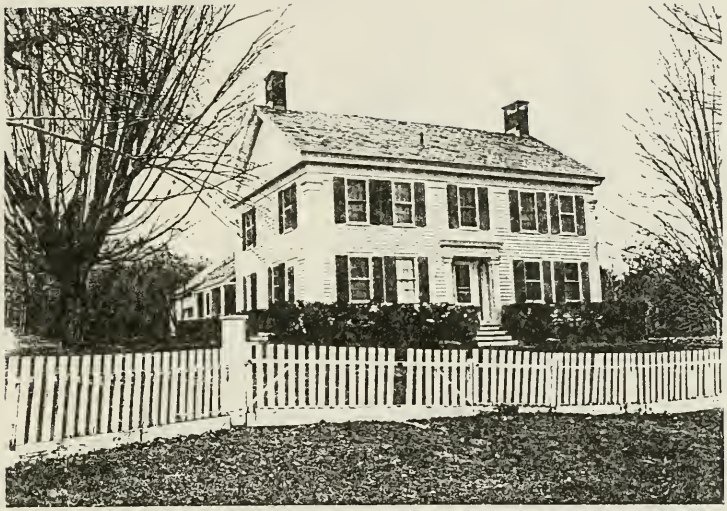


Figure 34. Tuttle Homestead.

Figure 35. W.K. Bixby and Sidney Tuttle at Lake George.

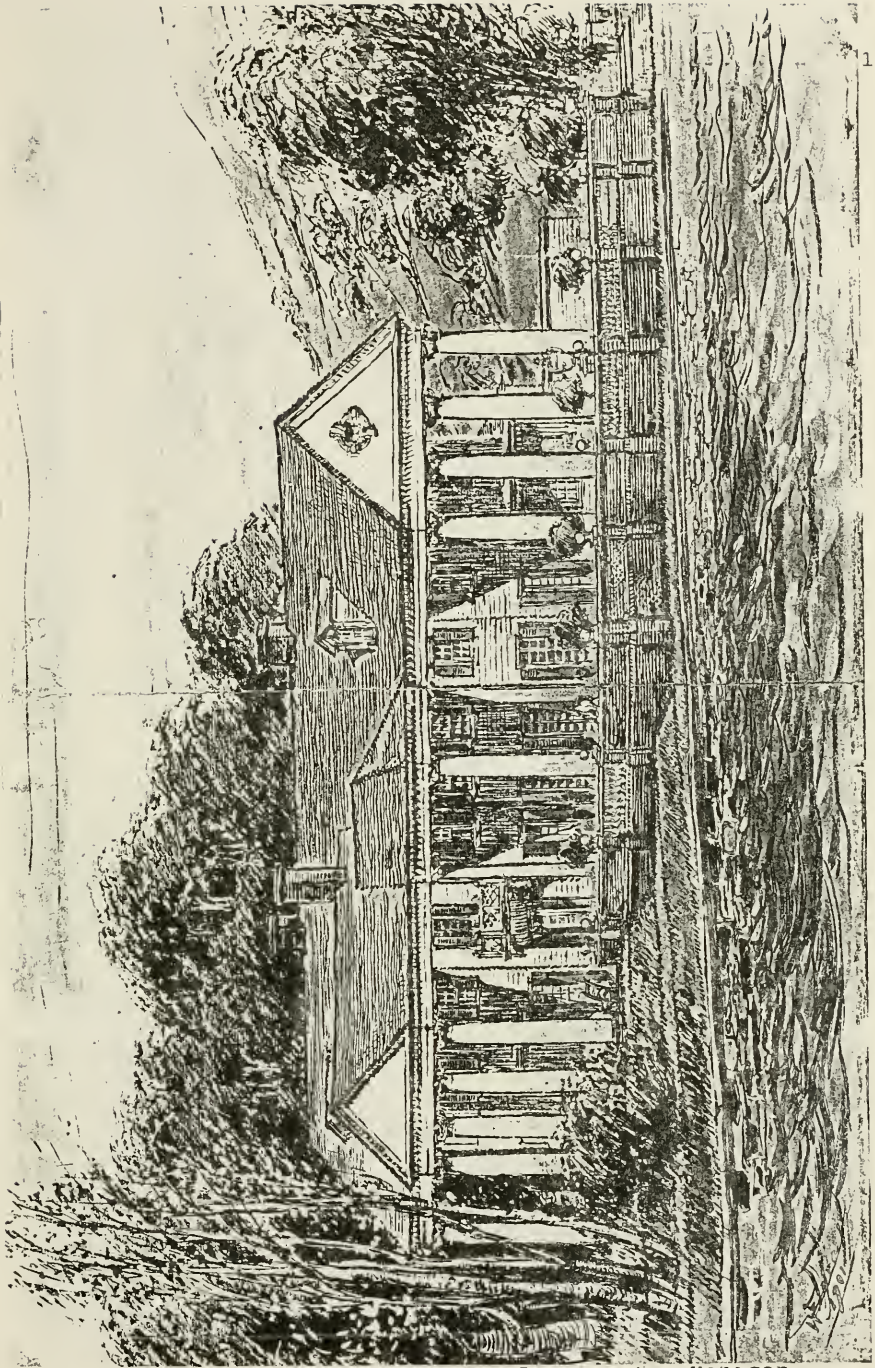


Figure 36. Wilson Eyre, Jr. Drawing for Monican Cottage 1901.

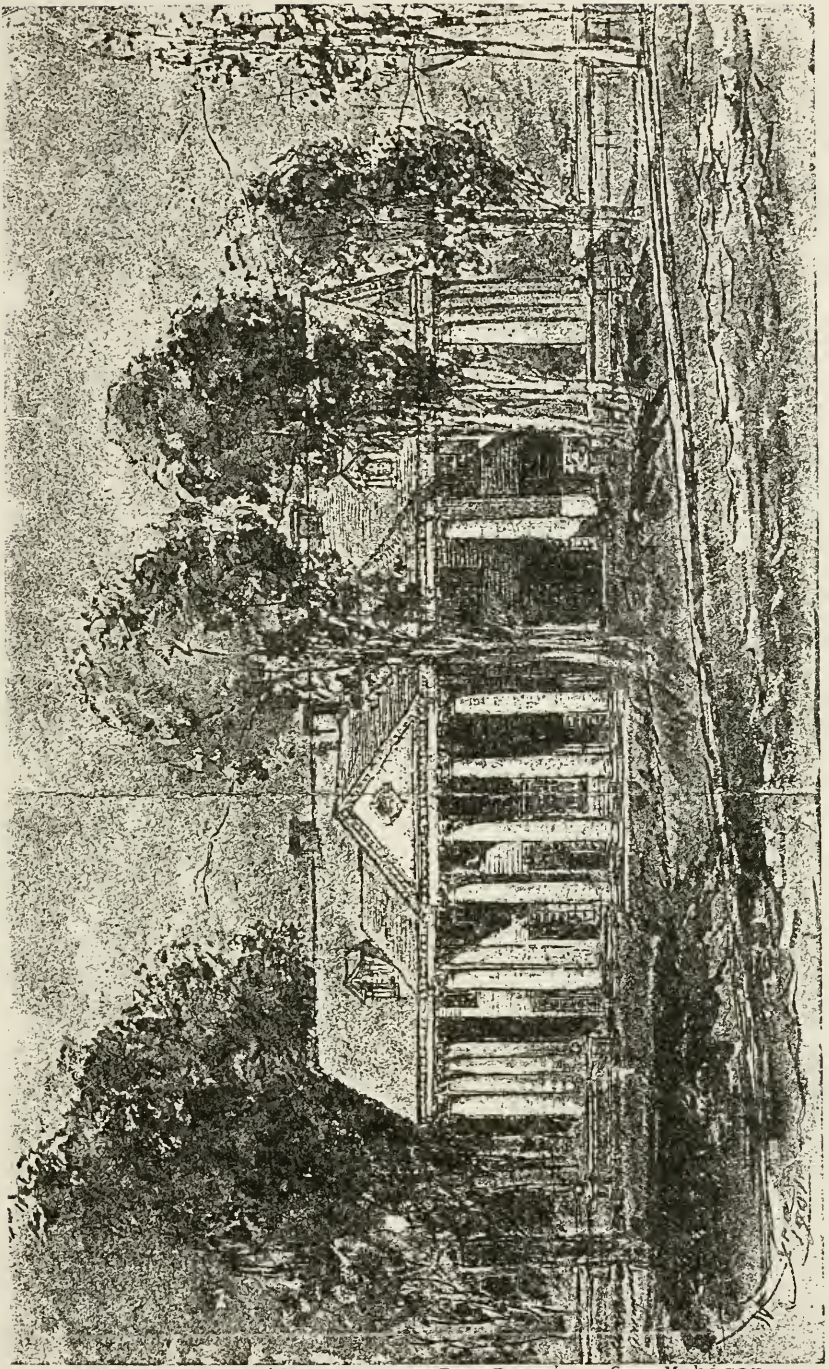


Figure 37. Wilson Eyre, Jr. Drawing for Mohican Cottage 1901.

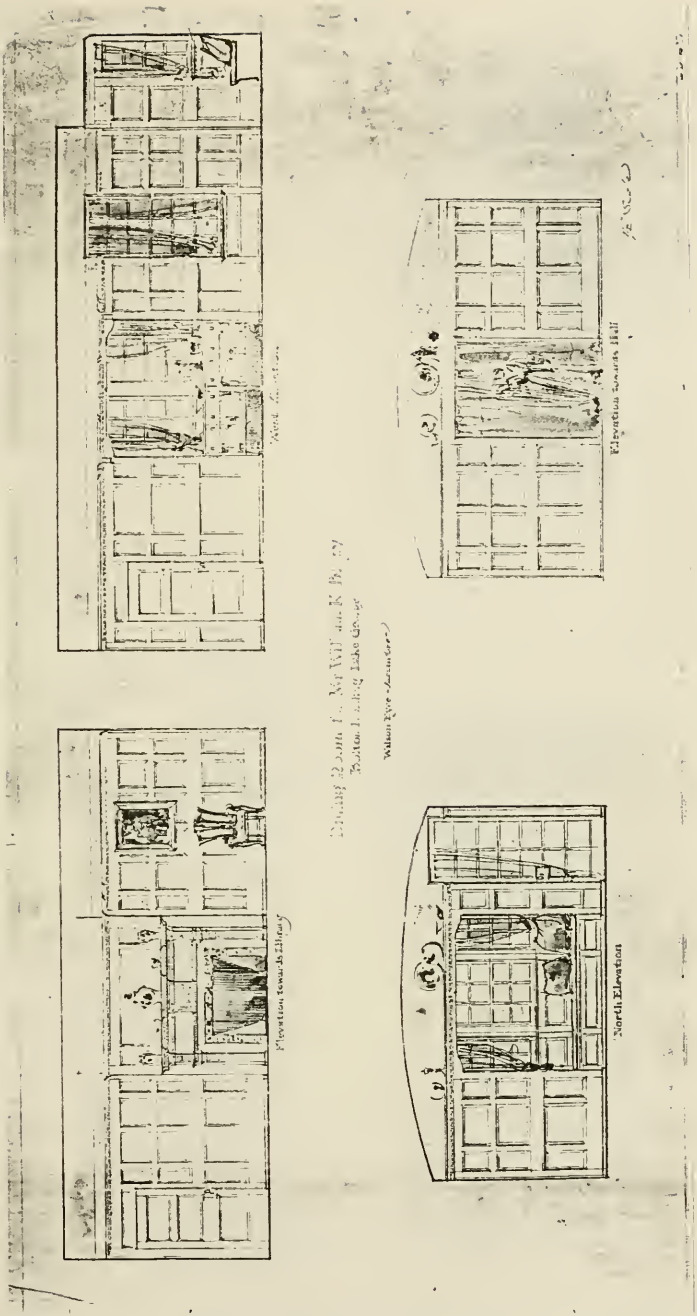


Figure 38. Wilson Eyre, Jr. Drawing for Dining Room, Mohican Cottage 1901.

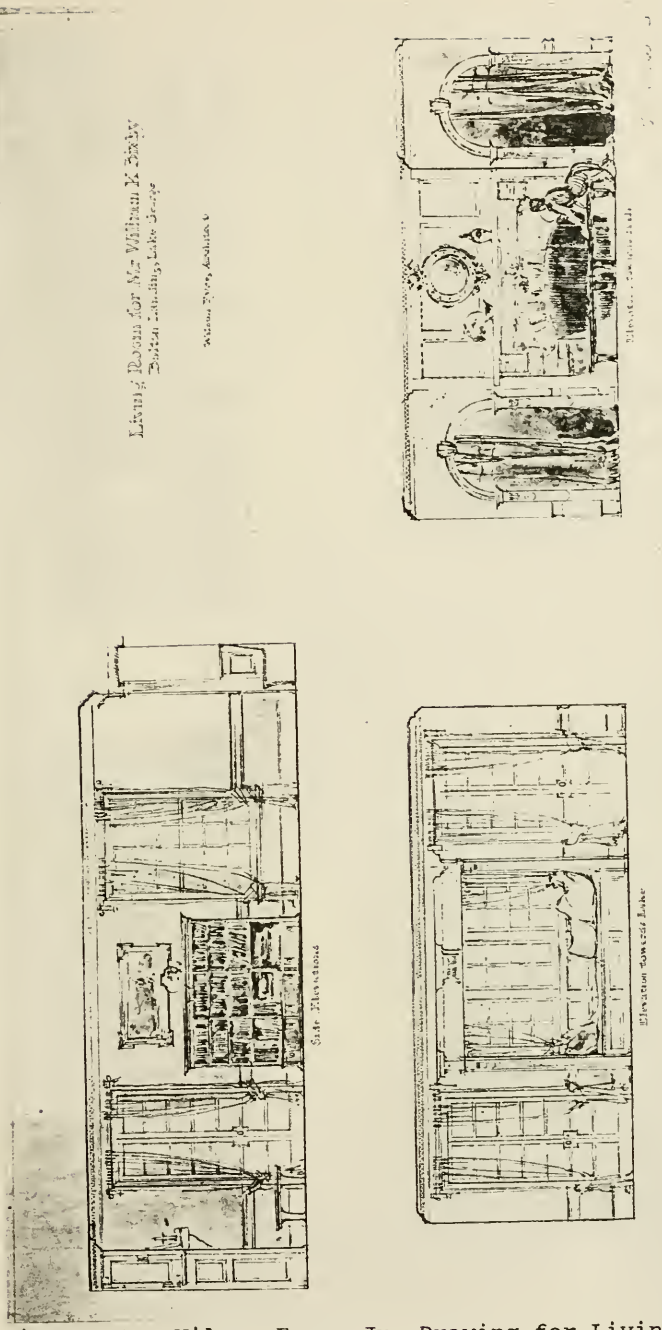


Figure 39. Wilson Eyre, Jr. Drawing for Living Room, Mohican Cottage 1901.

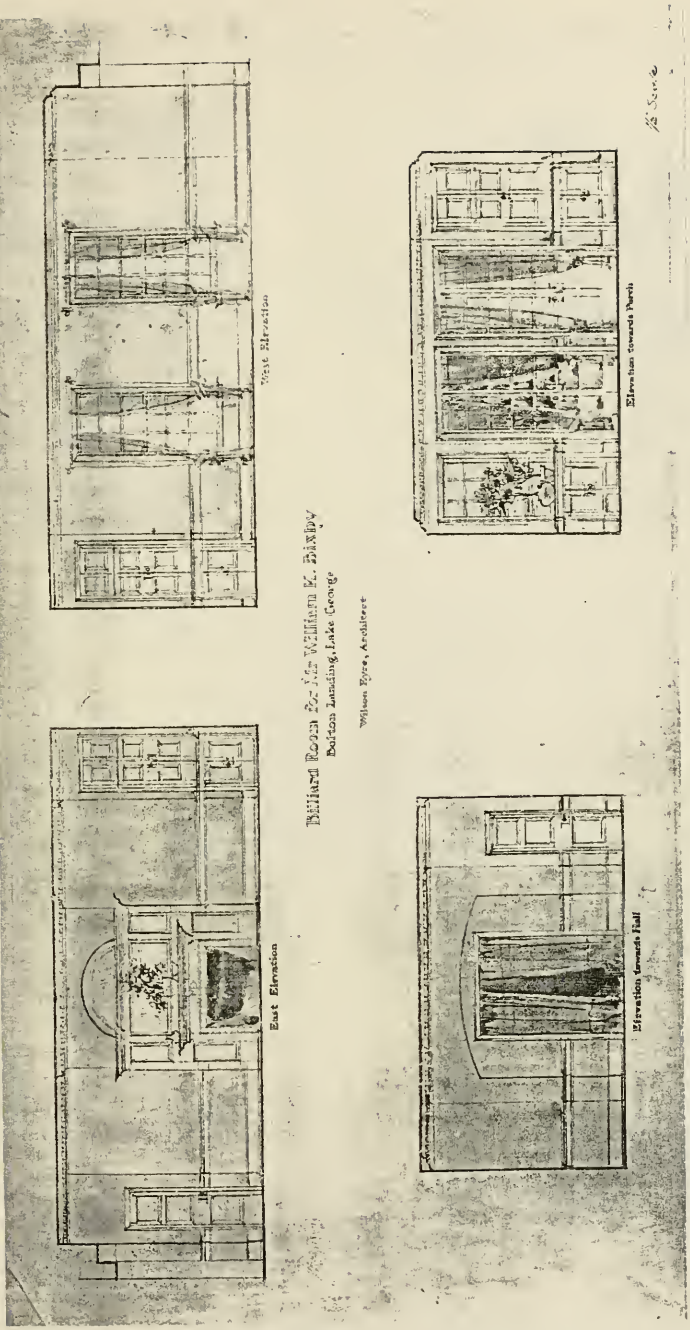


Figure 40. Wilson Eyre, Jr. Drawing for Billiard Room, Mohican Cottage 1901.

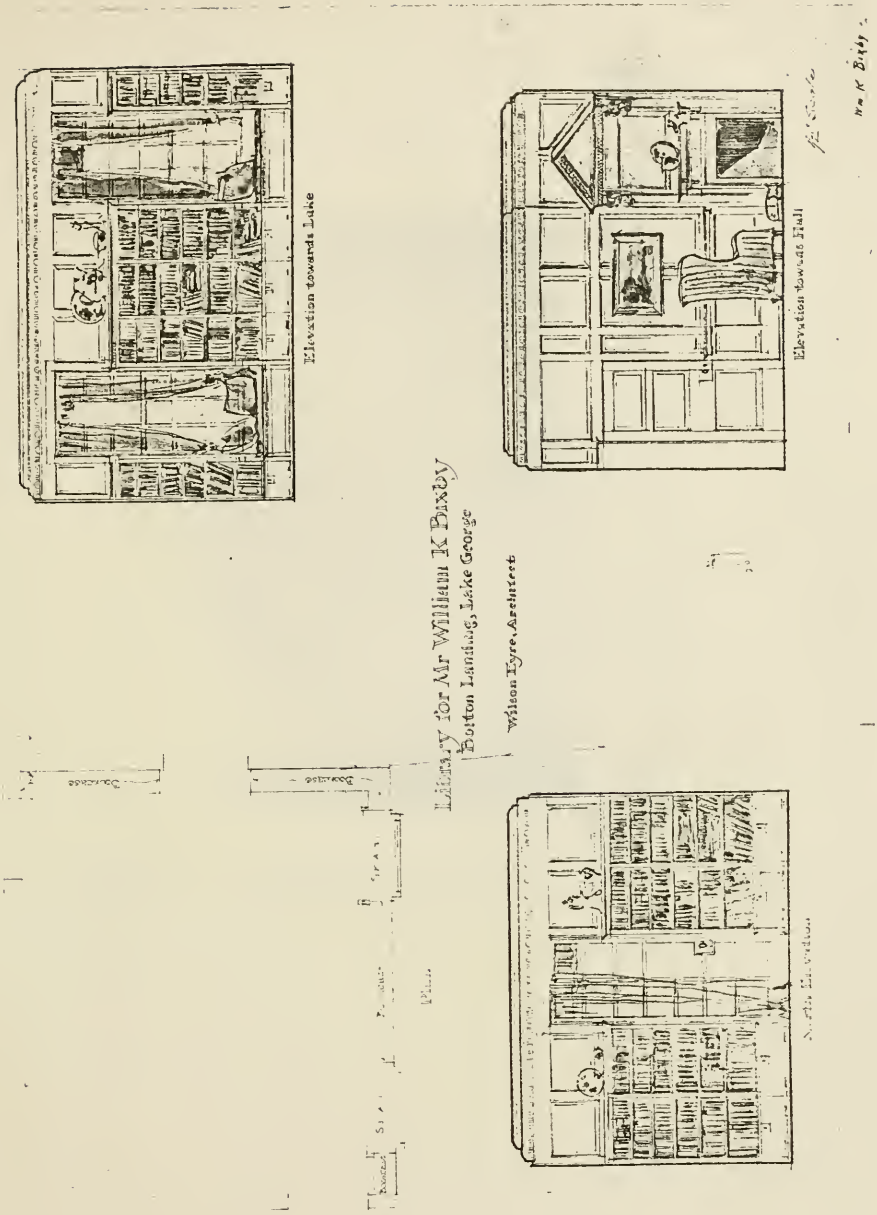


Figure 41. Wilson Eyre, Jr. Drawing for Library, Mohican Cottage 1901.

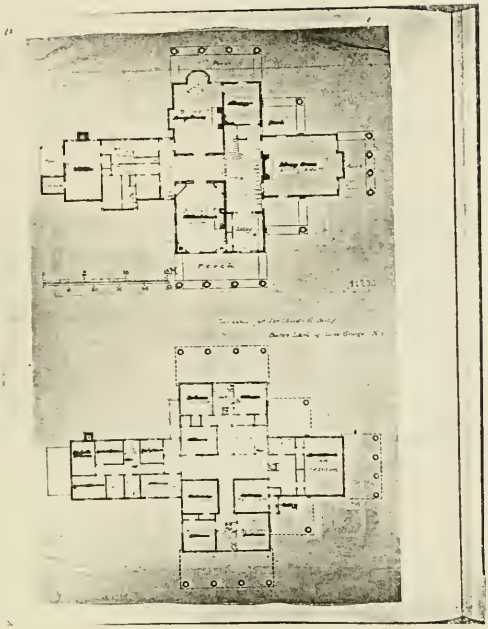


Figure 42. Eyre Plans for Mohican Cottage used in House and Garden 1903.

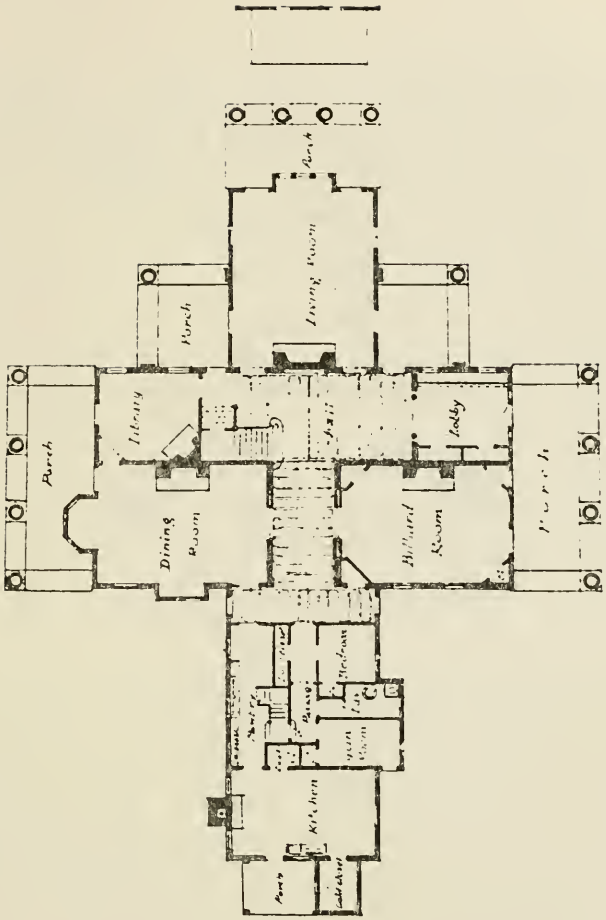


Figure 43. First Floor Plan for Mohican Cottage.

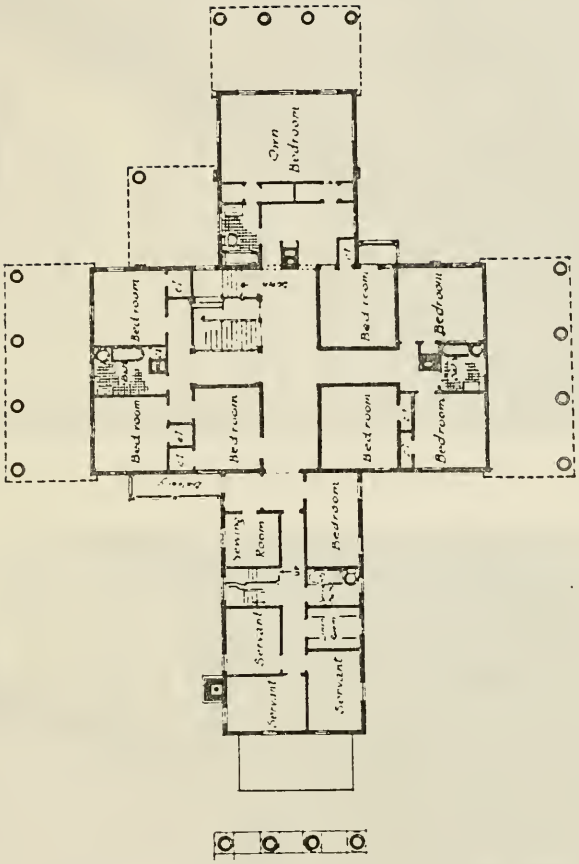


Figure 44. Second Floor Plan for Mohican Cottage.

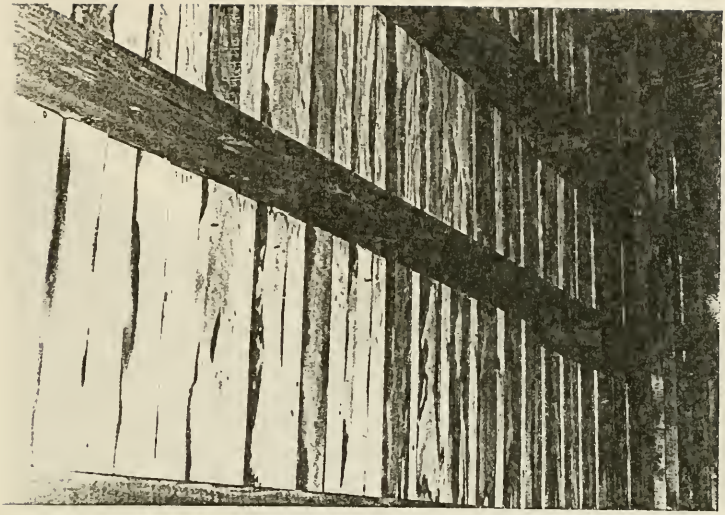


Figure 45. Balloon Frame.

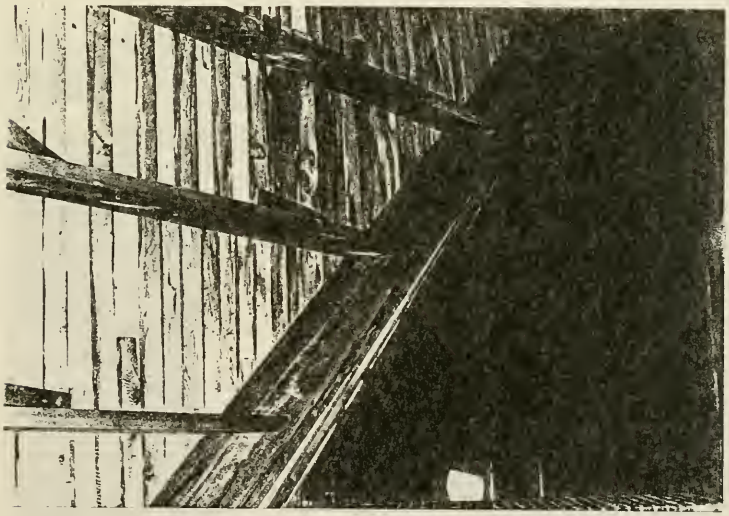


Figure 46. Balloon Frame.

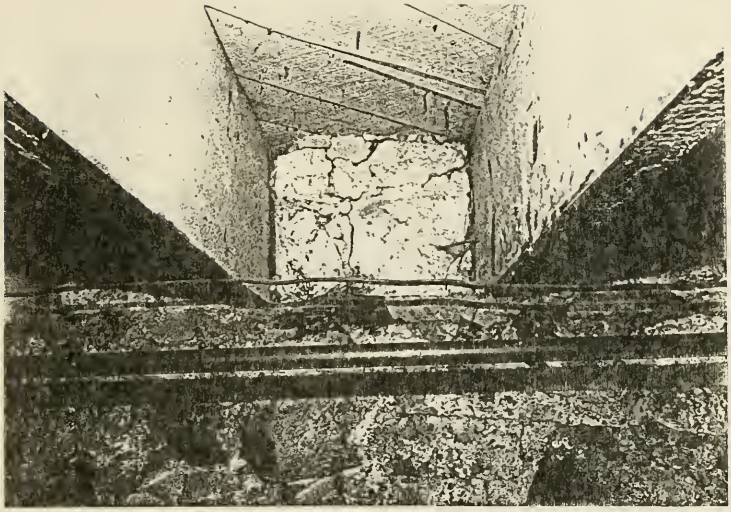


Figure 47. Mohican Cottage Foundation Showing Joist to Stone Juncture.

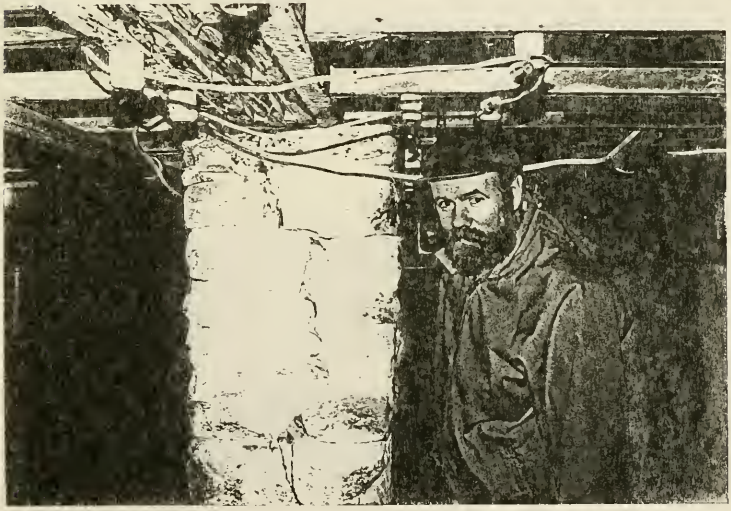


Figure 48. Mohican Cottage Foundation.

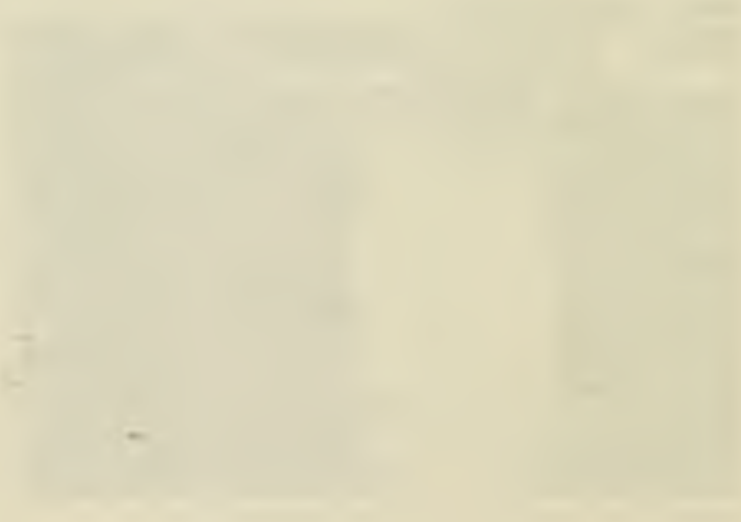


Figure 49. Mohican Cottage c. 1902
Showing Southeast Porch Before Enclosure.

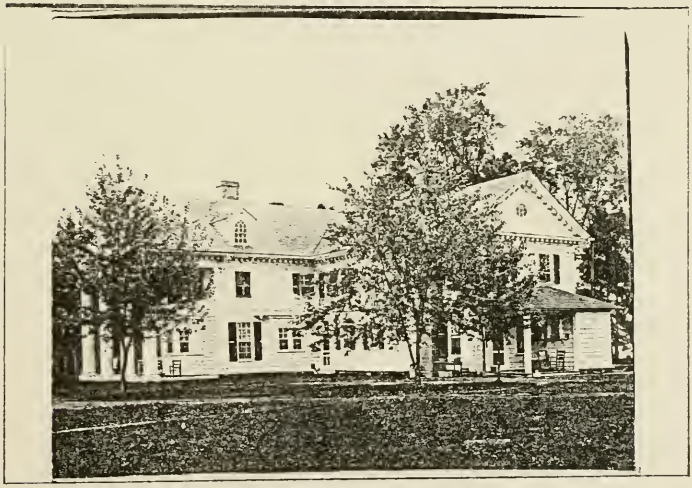


Figure 50. Mohican Cottage c. 1902
Northwest Facade Showing Balustrade
Balcony and Kitchen Wing.

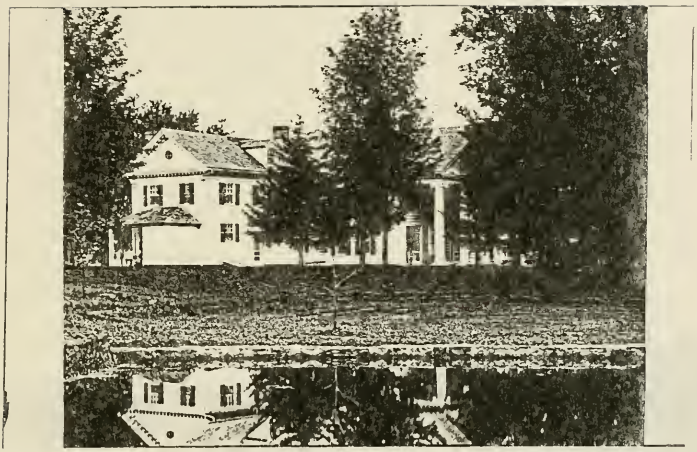


Figure 51. Mohican Cottage c. 1902. Southwest Corner.

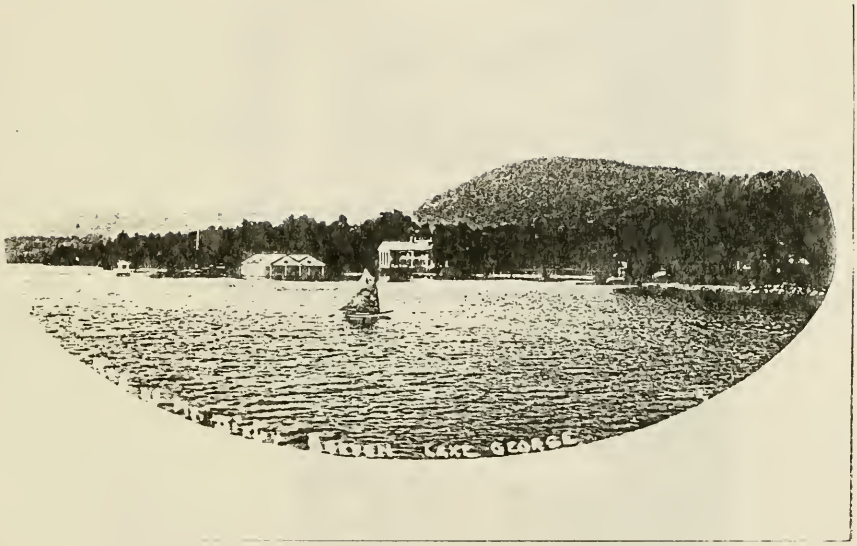


Figure 52. Overall View of Mohican Point. 1902.

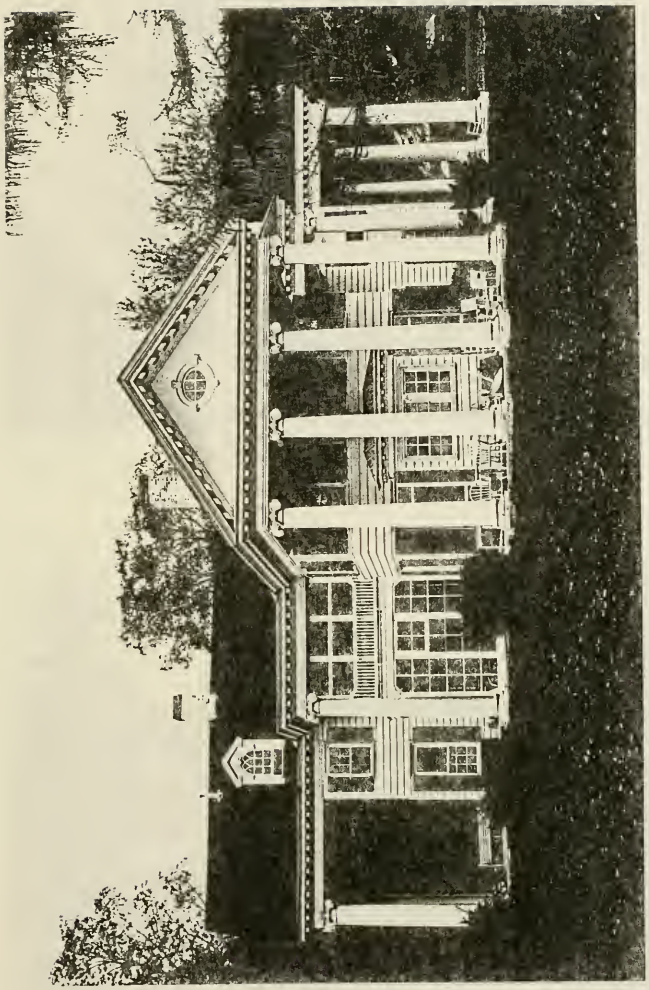


Figure 53. Mohican Cottage East Facade. 1989.

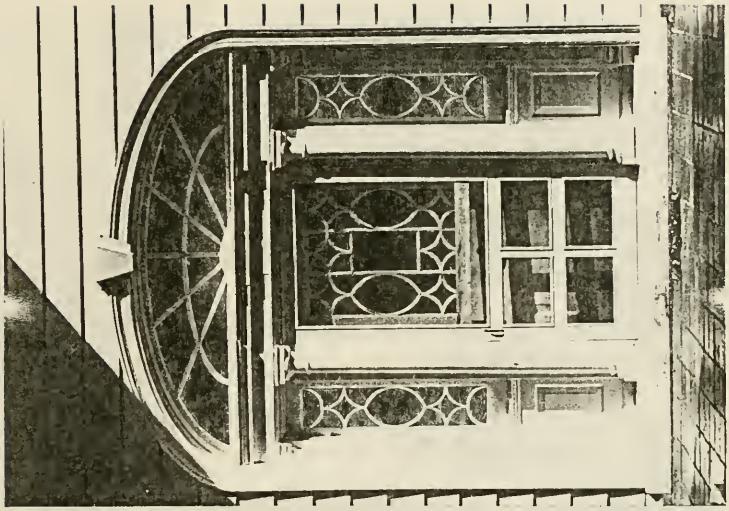
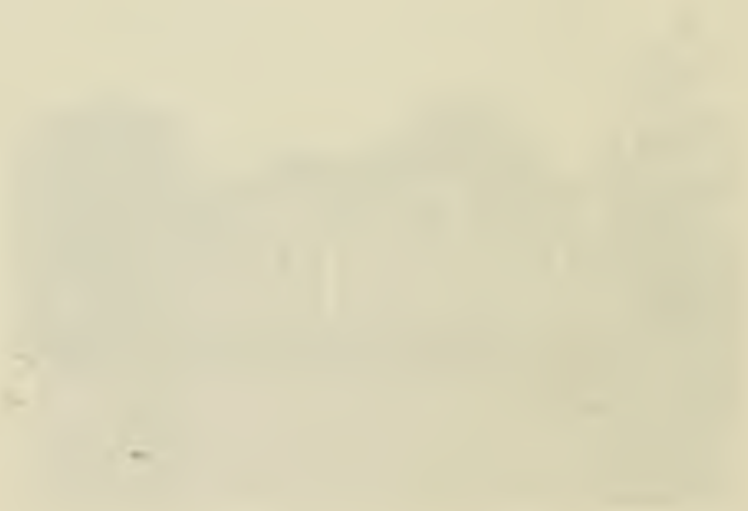


Figure 54. Mohican Cottage Entrance. 1989.

Figure 55. Mohican Cottage Northeast Facade. 1989.



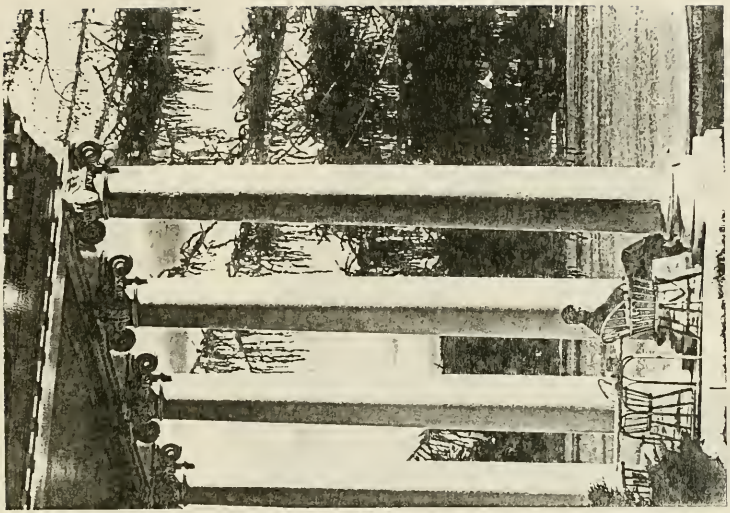


Figure 56. Mohican Cottage Portico. 1989.

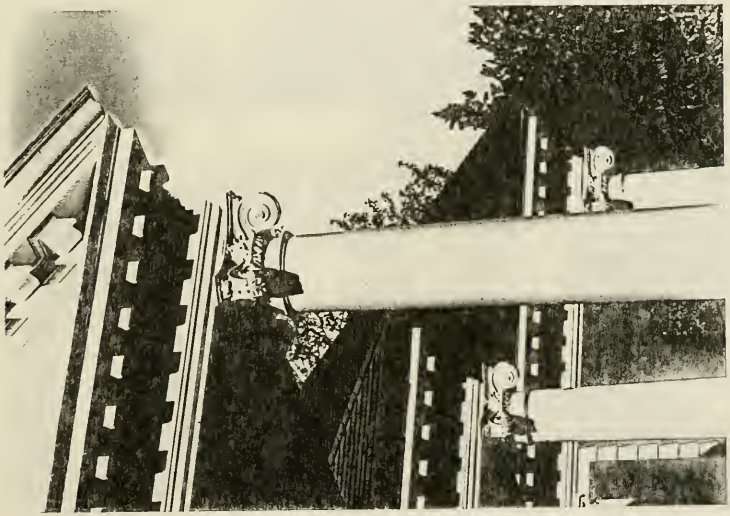


Figure 57. Mohican Cottage Detail Ionic Columns.1989.

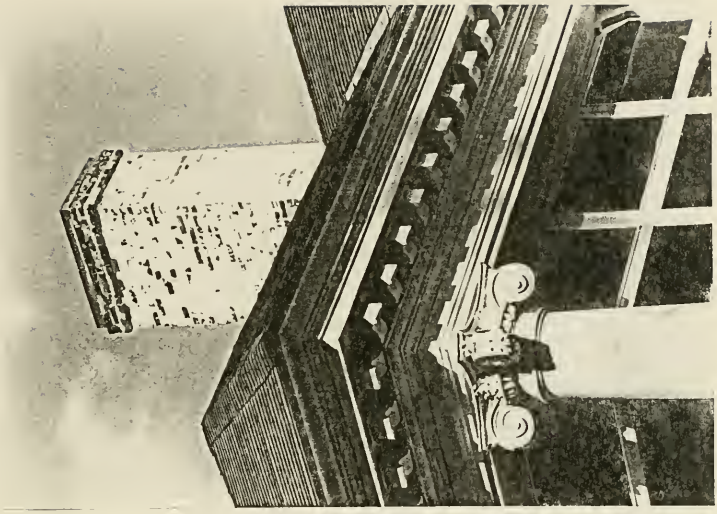


Figure 58. Mohican Cottage Modillion Detail. 1989.

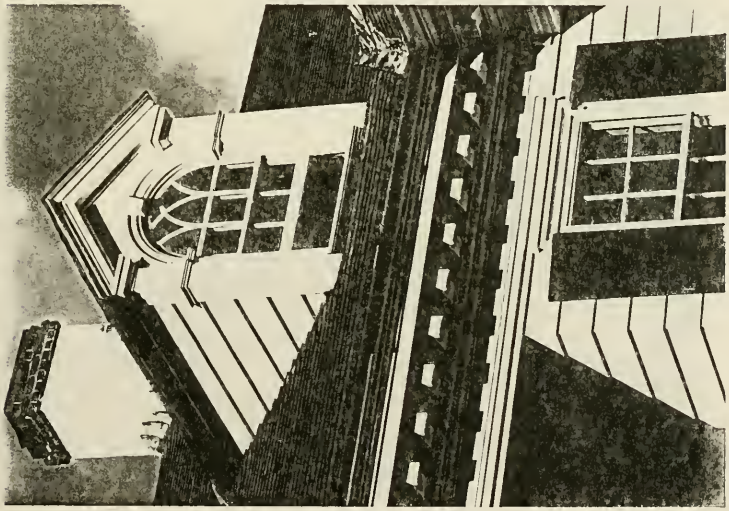


Figure 59. Mohican Cottage Dormer Detail. 1989.

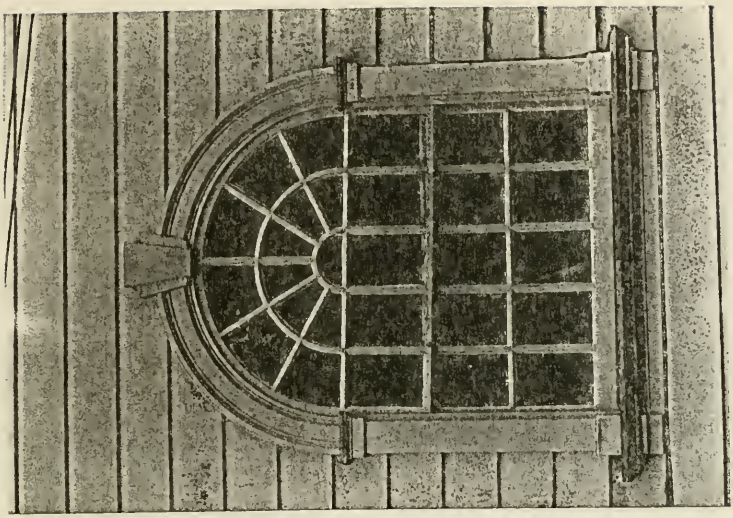


Figure 60. Mohican Cottage Window Detail. 1989.

Figure 61. Mohican Cottage West Facade. 1989.

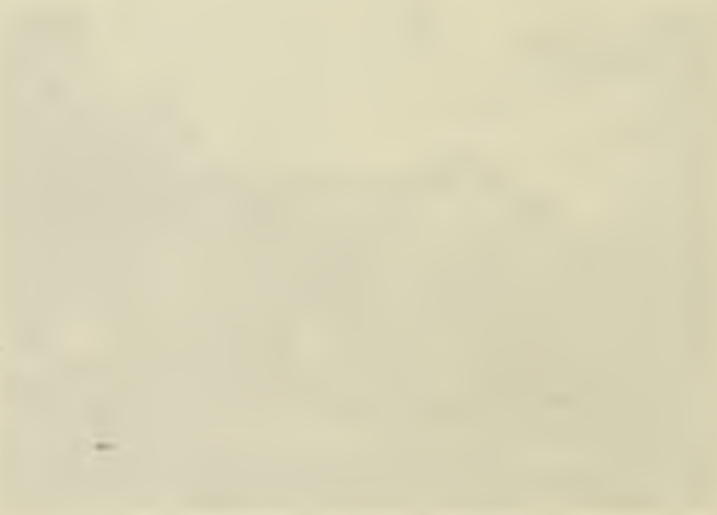


Figure 62. Mohican Cottage North Facade. 1989.

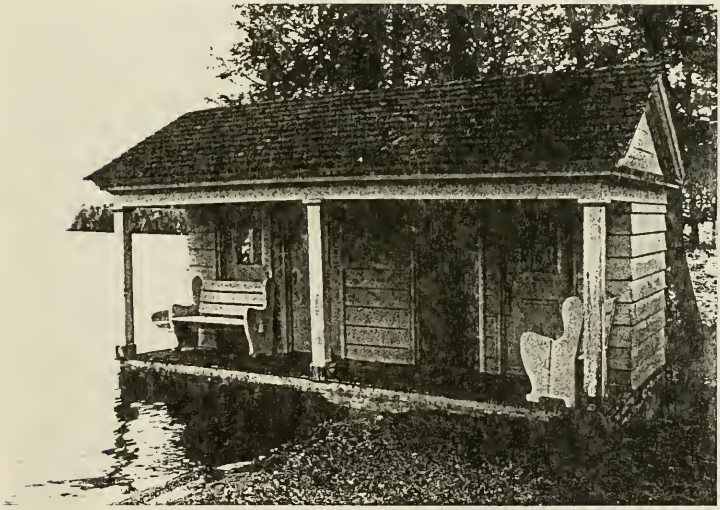


Figure 63. Bath House at Mohican Point. 1990.

Figure 64. Boathouse. 1989.

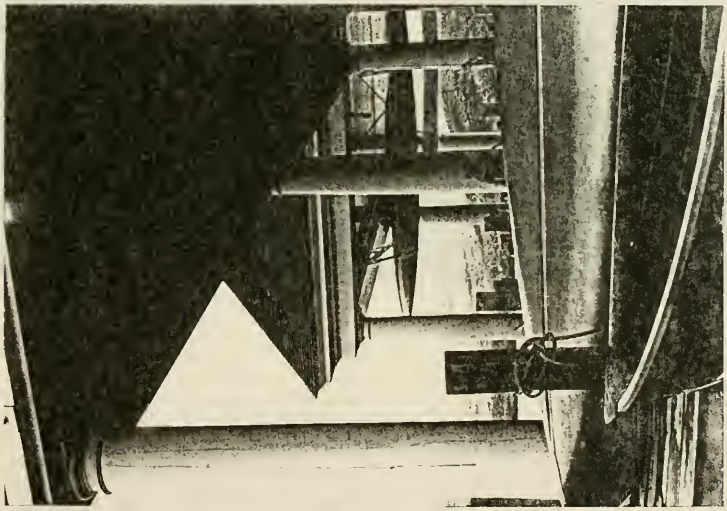


Figure 65. Boathouse Detail. 1989.

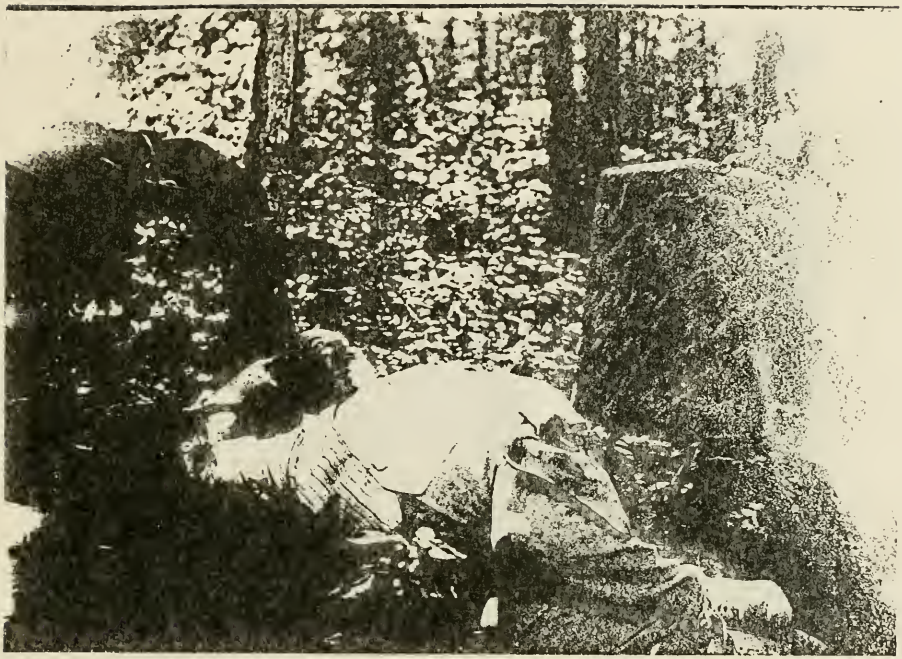


Figure 66. William Keeney Bixby Reclining. c. 1902.

Figure 67. Bixby Family at a Campfire, Mohican Point. c. 1902.

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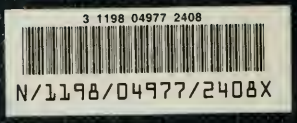
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